Reflections on the nation-state : politics and culture in 'Yo el Supremo' by Augusto Roa Bastos

Kraniauskas, John

REFLECTIONS ON THE NATION-STATE: POLITICS AND CULTURE IN 'YO EL SUPREMO' BY AUGUSTO ROA BASTOS.

Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph. D. in Latin American Literature.

King's College, University of London

JOHN KRANIAUSKAS

ABSTRACT

In this work I concentrate on the theme of the state in Augusto Roa Bastos' novel, Yo el Supremo. In PART ONE I suggest that a historical reading of the time and place of the work's writing -and the processes that lead to it- show how the nation-state emerges as an object of literary concern for Roa Bastos at a moment of crisis in the Liberal State -firstly, in Paraguay, and then, most importantly, in Argentina during the 1970's. I thus underline the importance of the present as a fundamental moment to any conception of history.

In PART TWO I further develop this insight theoretically, in a critique of one of the most important articles written on Yo el Supremo, and more practically, in relation to dominant political culture in Paraguay -where the historical referent of the novel (the dictator José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia) functions as the very image of the nation-state.

In PART THREE I put forward the hypothesis that the 'dictatorship novel' in Latin America -as an extension of the 'historical novel'- traces a genealogy of political society -that is, state formation- in the area, rather than of civil society -as in Europe. I then show how Yo el Supremo reflects upon the origins of this process by dramatising the aporias of Rousseau's The Social Contract. I finally compare the writing practices of dictation and compilation. If the former sets down the letter of the law, I suggest that the latter both mimics and subverts it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Augusto Roa Bastos is Paraguay's most famous living author, and is regarded as one of the most important Latin American novelists writing today. Very schematically, his personal literary history is as follows: El trueno entre las hojas (1953), his first published collection of short stories, put him on the literary map of Paraguay and Argentina; his second published work, the novel Hijo de Hombre (1960), consolidated his reputation, making him Paraguay's foremost prose writer and, even if generally not included as one of the main writers of the so-called 'boom' in Latin American literature during the 1960's, like Juan Carlos Onetti and José María Arguedas, a writer of considerable importance in the region. This reputation was enhanced with the publication of other volumes of short stories during that decade, for example El baldío (1966), Los pies sobre el agua (1967), Madera quemada (1967), Moriencia (1969), and Cuerpo presente (1972). The 'boom' had more or less officially ended by the time Roa Bastos' second novel, Yo el Supremo, was published in 1974. This work was immediately recognised as a major Latin American classic by both fellow writers, like Alejo Carpentier, and literary critics alike. It also -in the context of the post 1960's processes of the internationalisation of Latin American literature associated with the 'boom' and, more dramatically, the 'diaspora' of many Latin American intellectuals during the 1970's- projected Roa Bastos' literary reputation onto the international literary stage, and has arguably led to a re-evaluation of his earlier work.

In this sense, although I am not sure that I agree wholeheartedly with Angel Rama's unnecessarily harsh statement that "La obra anterior de Roa Bastos se ordena en torno de este sol como un servicial sistema planetario", it is true that its publication has acted as a sort of springboard from which literary critics and historians have begun to throw more light on the author's previous writing. The novel has not only, however, generated an interest that looks backwards at the author's personal literary history, but one which at times has also generated somewhat grandiose claims for its significance in the contexts of both Latin American and international literary traditions. For Juan Manuel Marcos, Roa Bastos has become, since the publication of Yo el Supremo, the 'precursor del post-boom' in Latin American literature, whilst for Wladimir Krysinski the work constitutes the 'vanishing point' of the modern novel as a whole. These are matters which I shall not go into in this work. On the one hand, it does not seem to me that there is a body of Latin American literature which can be identified as conforming such a literary trend, or even that it is desirable to encode the multiplicity of literary production in the area in ways that rely on what they are not to give them substantive meaning. With regard to the second claim, I feel that, however important Yo el Supremo may be, it does the work a disservice to write its future history a priori, let alone that of the novel form itself.

The above schematic outline of Roa Bastos' literary

biography is, however, only informative insofar as it is problematised. It gives the impression, left as it is, of an exemplary and linear literary career progressing from national to continental and international fame. This has happened in a way -and was confirmed by Roa Bastos being awarded the Premio Miguel de Cervantes in 1989- but it was hardly a smooth or unproblematic process. Although some of Roa Bastos' works are set text-books in Paraguayan schools, and although he is recognised as the country's most important novelist and short story writer, he has been unable to live and work there for most of his 'literary' life. Indeed, there is a problem right at the beginning of the above story: Roa Bastos' published novels and short stories, including all those works mentioned above, have all been written in exile. This is an important fact, and will be underlined in PART ONE, where I argue that Yo el Supremo is not only a Paraguayan novel but an Argentine one as well. The ways that the concrete experience of actually living and working in exile mark the text have not, I feel, been sufficiently appreciated -if at all. In many instances this has meant that when trying to situate the novel historically, the time and space of its production are wiped away, and instead interest is focused exclusively on the work's historical referent: the dictatorship of José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (1813-1840). This operation can result in critics -that is, those very few who have produced non-formalist readings of Yo el Supremo- comparing the real Dr. Francia with the novelised 'El Supremo', and interpreting

the work exclusively on these grounds. In the pages that follow I shall, on the contrary, underline the historicity of the present as fundamental not only to an understanding of the novel (that is, the time of its writing) but by implication to history as such (see, in particular, PART TWO: CHAPTER FOUR). In concrete terms, this means taking into account political and cultural developments in Buenos Aires, where Roa Bastos lived and worked from 1947 to 1976. Thus, not only is Yo el Supremo also an Argentine novel in the way I shall explain below, but Roa Bastos himself only became an important Paraguayan novelist -like other important Paraguayan writers such as Gabriel Casaccia and Elvio Romero- elsewhere, in exile, in Buenos Aires. The underlying reasons for this lie in the political and economic history of the region (PART ONE: CHAPTER TWO). In other words, I feel that another dimension is given to the significance of the work if the fact that Roa Bastos wrote about Dr. Francia from Buenos Aires in the early 1970's is taken into account.

This does not, of course, mean that I ignore Paraguay altogether. On the contrary. One of the purposes of PART ONE is, in fact, to illuminate the ways in which the histories of Argentina and Paraguay have been intimately intertwined. I thus foreground the dual social inscription of Yo el Supremo (and, more schematically, Hijo de Hombre) in the political cultures of both nations. In PART TWO (CHAPTER FIVE) moreover, I 'return' to Paraguay and attempt

to situate the novel in the context of its real historical object: the multiple texts conforming the myths of Dr. Francia in the country's dominant political culture. Here 'el Supremo Dictador' is shown to represent a mobile 'structure of authority' which is evoked in different ways and by different social groups in the nation's hegemonic text. I thus attempt to show how the novel is both marked by such a context and rebels against it.

Throughout PARTS ONE and TWO I also trace how the state (as embodied in a national hero) emerges as an object of literary concern for Roa Bastos. Firstly, in the context of the formation and crises of the Liberal State in the area, and particularly in relation to the rise of populism and Left Peronism (CHAPTERS ONE and THREE) and, in the Nineteenth century, to the War of the Triple Alliance (1865-1870) (CHAPTER TWO); and secondly, in relation to the dissemination of the figure of Dr. Francia as the founder and very image of the nation in Paraguay (CHAPTER FIVE).

In PART THREE I focus almost exclusively on the question of the State. In CHAPTER SIX I advance the hypothesis that the historical novel in Latin America does not, as in Europe, trace the genealogy of bourgeois civil society but, rather, of bourgeois political society. In this sense, I suggest that the 'dictatorship novel' -as a regional variant of the historical novel- might benefit from being considered as, in some sense, a reflection on the particular form the

state has taken in Latin America as the prime institutional mover of bourgeois society and culture. In CHAPTER SEVEN I show how Yo el Supremo itself reflects on the origins of the state and political modernity in the area through a dramatisation of the aporias -condensed in the fictional character of the Lawgiver- of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's The Social Contract. Finally, in CHAPTER EIGHT, I contrast the practices of the dictator in the text, who writes the law (dictation), with that of the Compiler of the novel who, I suggest, both mimics and subverts it (compilation) -indeed, the literary practice of compilation is foregrounded throughout the following pages.

*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have assisted me in the completion of this thesis. Particularly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. William Rowe. My colleagues at the Centre for Latin American Cultural Studies (CLACS) and the Asociación de Estudios de Literatura y Sociedades de América Latina (AELSAL) have all, perhaps unwittingly, provided the intellectual environment in which I could, at long last, complete this project. My friends in the London-based Paraguayan Committee for Human Rights, especially Ricardo Medina, provided a much needed forum in which I could test my ideas on the history and cultures of Paraguay. My family have also patiently supported me throughout my endeavour. Without the friendship, solidarity, and intellectual support -over many years- of Peter Osborne, finishing this thesis

would have been very difficult indeed. I thank him most of all.

PART ONE

EXILED IN ARGENTINA: POPULIST RUPTURES AND THE LIBERAL STATE.

That Yo el Supremo is a Paraguayan novel goes without saying. Or does it? Most, if not all, critics have taken it for granted. After all, the author is Paraguayan and the novel overwhelmingly refers to Paraguay; it addresses Paraguayan issues. In one of the most important articles on Roa Bastos' work -one of the only to take this national context seriously- Rubén Bareiro Saguier has pointed out several of the work's historical anachronisms -references within the text to historical events and structures at the time of its writing- that inscribe its discourse into a context governed by political and economic developments in contemporary Paraguay. In this reading the novel's historical horizons are drawn in relation to events at two moments of the nation's history: on the one hand, the dictatorship of José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (1813-1840), and on the other, the dictatorship of General Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989) -the periods, respectively, of the novel's subject matter and of its writing.[1] Bareiro Saguier's observations are fundamental for any understanding of the novel, and I shall return to them again briefly below. Here, however, I want to suggest that these Paraguayan parameters do not exhaust either the discourses or the historical processes into which Yo el Supremo is inscribed. This is primarily because they do not take into account how the actual context in which the novel was written also marks its production.

As is well known, Roa Bastos wrote Yo el Supremo in

Buenos Aires, the local metropolis, where it was published in 1974. He had lived and worked there since 1947. What I want to show in this Part are the ways in which Yo el Supremo can also be considered an Argentine novel. The novel's fundamental narrative gesture is not just a 'looking back to' (the time of its historical 'referent'), but also a 'looking back from' (the time and place of its writing). As we shall see, exile in Roa Bastos' case does not just provide a location from which his native land may be looked upon with new eyes, be it nostalgically or critically, but one which, because a fundamental part of his socio-political and cultural experience, is also constitutive of his literary practice. The particular form this takes gives the novel regional significance -that is, makes it a Paraguayan-Argentine novel- reflecting in turn not only the ways in which developments in Argentine history, particularly the formation of the Liberal nation-state, were constitutive of Paraguay's own social and economic history (the particular form of its dependency), but also how more contemporary developments in Argentine history during the 1960's and 1970's may have fashioned the author's perspective on the dramatic story he tells about the emergence of an independent Paraguayan republic. In other words, this is not merely a matter of conjunctural determinism, but rather, albeit because of the nature of the particular conjuncture, a question of substantive historical significance which Yo el Supremo assumes and inscribes into the very body of its

text. It constitutes both an important aspect of the work's historicicity and an important thread in the political logic of its production. The function of the following three chapters is to illuminate this forgotten moment of the novel's production.

To rehearse this same argument, now in terms of the text itself, it is clear that the discourse of the novel's main character and narrator, El Supremo, is organised (one of the functions of another character, the Compiler) in such a way that it travels forwards in time to address his critics and readers, and the context of his literary production in Yo el Supremo (another function of the Compiler). As I have pointed out, the line traced by this story cannot be contained in a linear national history of Paraguay. This is because it has an important spatial dimension which breaks these parameters and takes it through Buenos Aires, the region's dominant cultural metropolis, installing both the past in the present of the novel's writing and, therefore, post-independence Paraguayan history in Buenos Aires during the early 1970's. Yo el Supremo's transnational political logic of production means, therefore, that it is socially inscribed into two different but intimately related national contexts, Paraguayan and Argentine.

As I shall discuss in much more detail in another chapter below, Roa Bastos has left the traces of his own

presence and practice scattered throughout the novel, mainly in the form of explanatory notes at the foot of its pages: 'notas del Compilador'. This fictional representation of the authorial self is an important gesture since it is highly (self-) critical of the traditional bourgeois conception of the author as 'creator',[2] highlighting instead, in avant-gardist fashion, the actual labour of literary practice as the artesanal work on the pre-formed materials of culture. More importantly for us here, however, is that by including the activities of artistic assemblage, narration and writing themselves in the work, it also thereby, as recognised by El Supremo himself, includes the historical moment of the novel's production:

> "La uña del indice me apunta. Me atraviesa. Él sonríe. Durante doscientos siete años me escruta en un soplo al pasar. Ojos de fuego. YO, haciéndome el muerto."[3]

As Milagros Ezquerro has noted,[4] the 207 years from which El Supremo ('YO' here) is being scrutinised is the number of years that go from 1766, when the dictator of Paraguay, Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, was born, to 1973 when Roa Bastos (as 'EL' here) was finishing writing Yo el Supremo. In this way, the novel points towards its own conditions of existence: the real Dr. Francia, dictator of Paraguay between 1814 to 1840, and the real author of the novel, Augusto Roa Bastos, writing in 1973: the novel's object which it both pre-supposes and re-produces, and the subject of its production. Yo el Supremo thus anchors itself in two specific moments of the region's history. What is more, in evoking both these historical figures it gathers them into

the text as literary ones: Francia as 'El Supremo' and the author as 'el Compilador'. The discourses of Yo el Supremo's two basic narrative voices thus have different and opposing directions: that belonging to the dictator (El Supremo), who thinks that he is making history, constantly overflows his present into the future,[8] from where the discourse of the Compiler, re-making history, moves back into the past, the dictator's present. Thus, the following question imposes itself here: from where is the dictatorship of Dr. Francia being read, compiled and written? The answer can only be a complex and multiple one, which I shall begin to approach by briefly looking at what constituted Roa Bastos's political and intellectual horizons of expectation in 1973 as he was finishing writing Yo el Supremo, 207 years after the birth of Dr. Francia. I hope to thus illuminate the ideological significance of writing about Dr. Francia and the emergence of an independent Paraguayan republic in Buenos Aires at the time. To do so, it is necessary to outline various relevant moments of the region's history in some detail. This will also require the inclusion of some biographical information about the author. From the complex interweaving of these histories I hope to show how the State emerges as an object of literary concern for Roa Bastos.

CHAPTER ONE
'POPULIST RUPTURES'

Augusto Roa Bastos left Paraguay for Buenos Aires in 1947, and was to live and work in Argentina until 1976 when he began his 'second exile' in France. It was in this period that he wrote most of his published work so far, including his collections of short stories and both his novels Hijo de Hombre (1960) and Yo el Supremo, on which his reputation as a Latin American writer rests.[6]

Why did Roa Bastos leave Paraguay? In March 1947 there was a military uprising in the northern town of Concepción against the pro-fascist dictatorial regime of General Higinio Morínigo, in power since 1940. It was backed by the combined forces of the 'Febrerista' and Communist Parties, organised into a popular front organisation under the direction of the once dominant oligarchic (landowning bourgeoisie) Liberal Party. A civil war ensued which lasted for approximately six months. The insurrectionary forces were at first very successful; driving southwards they almost took Asunción. Here, however, they were eventually defeated and routed by government forces and the feared peasant milititas (the 'Ŷynandí'), organised by the other political organistion of the oligarchy, the Colorado Party, and backed by last minute military assistance sent by the government of General Perón in neighbouring Argentina.

During the 1940's Roa Bastos had begun his apprenticeship as a writer, publishing, as we have noted, a

book of poems, and, most importantly, working for the liberal newspaper El País. He started as a crime reporter, and by 1944 had become a member of its editorial staff. That same year he was awarded a grant by the British Council which enabled him to visit Britain and France towards the end of the Second World War. In 1945 he returned, and the following year the newspaper published some of his 'war writings' in a small pamphlet called La Inglaterra que yo ví. During the political turmoil of the period the edition was destroyed by the fascistic militias of the Morínigo-Colorado Party government when they attacked the newspaper's offices. Roa Bastos managed to escape and eventually found refuge in the Brazilian Embassy. An order for his capture 'dead or alive' had been issued by Juan Natalicio González, the leading Colorado minister in the Morínigo government, organiser of the worker and peasant militias (the 'Guión Rojo' and 'Pynandí'), a writer, short-lived President and extreme right-wing national populist ideologue. With the crushing of the insurrectionary forces thousands of Paraguayans fled into exile.[7]

The 'irony' of this situation should not be lost. In going to neighbouring Argentina Roa Bastos arrived in a country whose governments had a long history of intervention in Paraguayan political life. As mentioned, in 1947 its newly elected populist government had just assisted those same forces that had forced so many into exile.[8] Viewed from the present, however, this 'ironic' twist is not merely

a personal affair. It has socio-political, economic and even cultural dimensions too. The historical period in which these events took place, and Roa Bastos left Paraguay for Buenos Aires, was characterised by what Ernesto Laclau has called a 'populist rupture', signalling a crisis in dominant oligarchic liberal hegemony in the region.[9] The differences in political experiences in both countries are, however, crucial. If in Argentina the populist movement (Peronism) was able to succeed and institutionalise its political gains, particularly in the trade union movement, this was not the case in Paraguay, where by the late 1950's and early 1960's an oligarchic restoration was imposed and subsequently reorganised under the dictatorial government of Stroessner and the Colorado Party. This, then, is the socio-political content of the events leading to Roa Bastos' flight into exile: it entailed a move from a political culture in which populism failed to consolidate and gain power, to another in which it did. The irony is, of course, that the populist government in Buenos Aires assisted in putting down a potential populist type of government in Paraguay.

The crisis of the Paraguayan oligarchic state has its origins in the early 1930's, towards the end of a period of Liberal rule that had lasted for over 25 years. It was foreshadowed by peasant uprisings between 1920 and 1923, demanding a resolution to the agrarian problem and the restitution of their rights to land monopolised by large

national landowners and foreign companies since the War of the Triple Alliance (1865-1870),[10] and caudillesque struggles between fractions of the Liberal Party. By the end of the 1920's these social conflicts were in grave danger of escaping its political control- the government of José P. Guggiari (1928-1932) was not only confronted by internal problems but by an added external threat as well. Internally, the continued dispossession and pauperisation of the peasantry, the lack of any real desire to carry out a meaningful policy of import substitution industrialisation to absorb the resulting surplus 'free' labour power, and the effects of the 1929 economic crisis, fuelled peasant discontent and middle class unrest. Coupled with the increasing militancy of a relatively small but active working class (the Paraguayan Communist Party was founded in 1928) the government was forced into adopting repressive measures, declaring a state of siege and severely crushing a student demonstration in Asunción and workers' protests in Puerto Pinasco. Externally, the steady incursion of the Bolivian military forces into the western Chaco region of Paraguay ('la guerra de los fortines') further exacerbated this unrest and led, as national sovereignty was, it was felt, being violated, to a generalised nationalist feeling of dissatisfaction with the way the Liberal Party was handling the long-standing conflict over both countries' national boundaries.[11] With the outbreak of the Chaco War (1932-1935) the second, external, aspect of the crisis in Liberal rule momentarily overdetermined and obscured the

first.

In effect, the whole nation was mobilised to push the invading Bolivian army off Paraguayan territory. Roa Bastos himself, when he was 15 or 16 years old, moved by the desire to defend the 'nation in danger', ran away from school in Asunción with a friend -thereby ending his formal education- and went to the front hiding in a boat full of troops. They were discovered but, because they were too young, sent to the rear and put to work cleaning toilets, transporting the wounded and looking after Bolivian prisoners as punishment.[12] Even with the eventual Paraguayan victory in 1935, however, the Liberal Party still had to contend with the internal dimensions of the crisis which were still very much alive. Many of the peasant-soldiers, whilst fighting to protect national sovereignty against Bolivian and U.S. oil interests in the Chaco, were also fighting for the right to their own plot of land.[13] In February, 1936, a group of nationalist officers led by Colonel Rafael Franco organised a rebellion supported by 'ex-combatientes', right-wing nationalists, civilian fractions of the Colorado Party, and the Communist Party, and ousted the liberal government of Eusebio Ayala. Out of this movement grew a new political party, the 'Unión Nacional Revolucionario', more commonly known as the 'Febreristas', whose main goal was to implement an eight-hour working day and, most importantly, an agrarian reform that would especially benefit the Chaco War veterans. Politically, however, unable to succesfully mediate

conflicting demands and revealing the predominance of factional over 'popular' interests, they turned against their support on both the right and left and, more recklessly, outlawed the Liberal Party. They did not last long. In August, 1937, the 'Febreristas' were overthrown by a military coup led by liberal military officers loyal to Field Marshal Estigarribia, commander of the victorious Paraguayan forces during the Chaco War. This defence of the agrarian status quo began the militarisation of Paraguayan politics, a process which was to deepen in years to come.

After a three year interlude of civilian government, the liberals convinced Estigarribia to stand as their presidential candidate in the hope that the 'hero of the Chaco War' might produce a national consensus. In March, 1939, he was duly elected. A year later, under pressure from militant petty bourgeois nationalists grouped around the magazine El Tiempo, amongst others, he closed down Congress, annulled the 1870 liberal Constitution and, paradoxically, had another one drawn up by young liberal intellectuals setting out the legal framework for a corporativist state modelled on the 'Estado Novo' of neighbouring Brazil under Vargas.[14] Within a few months, however, Estigarribia was killed in an air crash, and presidential power was ceded to his Minister of the Interior, General Higinio Morínigo, who was to impose a harsh, pro-Axis military dictatorship on the people of Paraguay until 1948. After the Second World War -under

internal and external pressure, especially from the U.S.- Morínigo attempted to promote a democratic opening of the political sphere. This was forestalled immediately, in January 1947, by a 'cuartelazo' led by military officers sympathetic to the Colorado Party which had been incorporated into, and which was by then in de facto control of, Morínigo's government. The uprising of March-August 1947 was, in part at least, a response to this political closure.

The defeat of the rebel forces in the 1947 civil war put a definitive end to Liberal influence in the country's political arena. The 'Febreristas' also withdrew back to the exile they had been banished into in 1937. This left the political arena open to monopolisation by the Colorado Party. It also, however, meant that it at least had to pay lip-service to some of the issues that had played a part in the political crisis over the past decade. Indeed, there were already deep divisions within the party reflecting both the caudillismo still predominant in Paraguayan politics, and the influence of new political ideologies and economic models throughout the political culture (especially, by now, Peronism). Thus, the following decade saw a continuation of the crisis in the oligarchic state, reflected in struggles now within the Colorado Party itself (the above mentioned Juan Natalicio González himself was briefly in power in this period), until the military coup of General Alfredo Stroessner in 1954 enabled the purging of its more

'populist' elements. By the end of the 1950's the oligarchic crisis had been negotiated and most of the politically organised opposition crushed.

As if in an inversion of political developments in Paraguay, the rise of Perón reflected changes in the socio-economic structures in Argentina, particularly the growth of a relatively strong urban working class, which were a force in the production of a successful populist rupture in the dominant Liberal state. This too was in crisis since the late 1920's and the collapse in the support of Radical Party leader Hipólito Yrigoyen after the economic crisis of 1929. In 1930 a Consevative coup d'etat overthrew his government, ending a relatively long democratic period in Argentine history. It was from this oligarchic political and cultural environment that Perón emerged[15] -indeed, as an officer, he participated in the coup.

Between 1930 and 1940, in response to the international economic crisis, a policy of import substitution industrialisation was implemented, strengthening an emerging local industrial borgeoisie and enlarging the working class constituency as migrants poured into Buenos Aires from the countryside. It was the lack of such a process in Paraguay that contributed to the crisis in oligarchic rule; it was also, arguably, an underlying reason for the failure to produce a populist rupture. Initially the result of an army demobilisation, the 'Febrerista' revolt first, and the 1947

insurrection later, were not able to rely on or produce the institutions of power necessary to consolidate the mobilisations against the caudillesque rivalry within the ruling Liberal and Colorado oligarchy. J. F. Segovia Corvalán, in underlining the strength of the dominant socio-economic structures of agrarian capitalism in Paraguay, also notes the weakness of another social actor -an emergent national industrial bourgeoisie-which was determinant in the formation of populist states in Latin America:

> "...era de tal trascendencia que determinó no sólo el desarrollo económico posterior, sino también el político. Al igual que el proceso no permitiría ya en lo sucesivo la formación de una burguesía nacional importante (como sucedió en otros países de América Latina en la década de 1920, dando lugar a la creación de los Estados que se conocieron como 'populistas') proporcionó la base para la persistencia del caudillismo y la conversión de los productores campesinos en clientela política del Partido Liberal (and from 1947 onwards, the 'Partido Colorado'- J.K.), esto es, su manipulación, mediante la eterna promesa de restitución de sus tierras, objetivo que no pudo ser cumplido más que parcialmente, por las limitaciones que imponía la presencia de la oligarquía terrateniente como socio en la coalición dominante."[16]

Paradoxically, however, given the rural dimension of these political and economic relations the rupture in oligarchic rule in Paraguay was perhaps potentially more radical than Peronism ever was in government. This was because of the intended frontal attack (agrarian reform) on the nation's economic structures. In Argentina, in contrast, the agrarian bourgeoisie was left relatively unscathed economically by Perón, and only marginalised politically until the early 1950's.

The political effects of Peronism were, nevertheless, substantial and were to transform the scene of Argentine political life right up until the present day. As David Rock has reminded us: "Since 1943 Peronism has been Argentina's strongest political party", managing to survive all attempts to either marginalise or destroy it.[17] This was due chiefly to its strong presence within the nation's urban working class trade union bureaucracies. The fact that it was the working class that constituted the movement's principal social base -en/abling it to apparently occupy the political stage as a major actor for the first time- did not mean, however, that Peronism articulated their interests in terms of a socialist programme. It rather fused them into an anti-liberal national-popular discourse welding together a hegemonic inter-class movement within an overall national capitalist one. Perón presented himself and the state, in typical corporativist fashion, as regulating the capital-labour relation in the name of 'social justice' and protecting capitalism from the dangers of the 'communist menace'.[18]

In effect, Roa Bastos arrived in Buenos Aires during what is known as the 'golden age' of Peronism. And he did not arrive alone. The process of import substitution (in other words, dependent) industrialisation of the 1930's accelerated the urbanisation of the region's metropolitan centre. A crucial factor in the emergence of Peronism was the accompanying flow of internal migration into Buenos

Aires from the provinces which in 1947, the year Roa Bastos arrived, reached a figure of 1.5 millions.[19] Given the agrarian structure of Paraguayan capitalism, since the 1900's there had been a steady flow of migrants to Buenos Aires looking for work and educational opportunities. It is thus quite possible that the above figure for 1947 includes many Paraguayan economic, cultural and, of course, political exiles, including Roa Bastos himslf. And it was this newly urbanised population that in large part formed the backbone of a newly unionised labour force ('los descamisados') in Buenos Aires which, once integrated into the nation's long-standing workers' movement, also constituted Perón's social base. In fact, it was Perón's strategic location within the state apparatus as the Secretary of Labour of a modernising, fascist influenced, military government that came to power in 1943 that ensured this process of unionisation and, more importantly, his position as its leader: 'el primer trabajador argentino'. From his office Perón was able to grant legal recognition to newly formed trade unions and also intervene in strikes in the workers' favour. This generated the appearance of a direct relation between labour and Perón in which the gains derived from the struggles of the former seemed to be concessions from the latter. Once elected President in 1946, this 'heroic' political imaginary was further underwritten by an economic post-war boom, enabling his government to bask in the glory of a substantial rise in workers' wages and a redistribution of national income in their favour at the expense of the

agrarian bourgeoisie.

This 'golden age' of Peronism lasted until approximately 1950. An economic crisis during the early 1950's, however, "brought about a reverse shift of the conditions prevailing during the boom period. In the 1940's the main opposition groups to Peronism could be either isolated or neutralised; this became impossible in the 1950's. In the earlier period the urban working class supported Peronism with enthusiasm and spontaneity; afterwards their relationship with the state was upheld more by cajolery and coercion. The crisis of the 1950's underlay the transformation of Peronism from participatory populism into something approaching a bureaucratic dictatorship".[20] By 1955 there was a wide spectrum of political forces united in their opposition to Peronism, ranging from the traditional Communist and Socialist Parties -victims of constant repression from Peronist forces since the mid-1940's- to the liberal oligarchy, and including sectors of the urban bourgeoisie, middle class -especially the intelligentsia, reacting to the government's control over the culture industry, and the climate of cultural nationalism in general[21]- and the Catholic church. In September an army revolt toppled the government and Perón was sent into exile. His first port of call was Asunción, Paraguay.

How did Roa Bastos, as a writer, position himself and, in turn, how was he positioned in relation to these events,

to the regional crisis in the oligarchic state? Most obviously, as the author himself has told us, he was hounded into exile. This suggests that in 1947, mid-way through and at the high-point of the crisis, his practice as a writer was unacceptable to the dominant political faction in Paraguay. The effect of this, of course, was to situate Roa Bastos outside of the national political terrain increasingly, by then, monopolised by the Colorado Party. In this regard, his experiences in Europe towards the end of the Second World War, as re-presented in the unpublished anti-Nazi play Mientras llega el día, took on an openly anti-Morínigo political meaning in the Paraguayan context of the time, as did his articles printed in La Inglaterra que yo ví. In his short biographical work, Augusto Roa Bastos, Bareiro Saguier discusses with the author the anti-fascist dimensions of the opposition to the Morínigo government, and recalls another of his political gestures: "...estaba relacionado con la inauguración de una gran exposición del libro argentino...Le tocó a Roa Bastos el cometido de pronunciar el discurso inaugural, dado su prestigio como intelectual...Por razones diplomáticas estaba invitado el Presidente Morínigo, a quien el orador dio ostensiblemente la espalda durante todo el tiempo de su peroración, sin haberlo tampoco nombrado al comenzar su discurso. Recuerdo muy bien el efecto que tuvo el gesto del escritor, sobre todo en los medios estudiantiles...su actitud valiente de desafío le ganó múltiples amigos..." -and of course 'enemigos', as his eventual exile shows.[22]

That Roa Bastos wrote most of his work in exile is important, as I shall further argue below, for understanding his literary production. That he made anti-fascist gestures is, of course, important too. There are, however, two other less well-known moments of his literary history in this period which register rather more ambiguous reactions to the crisis in oligarchic hegemony and which also hold further clues for an understanding of Yo el Supremo. These illustrate a continuing concern for 'heroic' national figures which are, moreover, representatives of the State.

In 1940 he wrote an elegy in homage to the above mentioned Field Marshal Estigarribia, who had just died in a plane crash. It is called "¡No llores patria! (Ante el túmulo del Mariscal José Félix Estigarribia)", and here are some of its verses:

"...
¿por qué hay llanto en los ojos de tus hijos
y en cada pecho una emoción intensa,
un vacío muy hondo y un sollozo
y una oración que en lo interior se reza?

¡Paraguayos, mirad y arrodillaos:
un túmulo solemne nos contesta,
el patrio altar cubierto de crespones
y el fuego eterno en la votiva tea!

Ya el adalid reposa, el que fue grande
apóstol en la paz, rayo en la guerra;
...

Y allí velando su eterno sosiego
la recia espada que forjó la gesta.

...
Pero no llores, patria, que la tumba
del paladín glorioso de dos gestas
no es sima oscura sino aurora y cumbre
que siempre alumbrará tu ruta eterna.
Ni sus despojos son yertos despojos

de la acaba mundanal grandeza
feneciendo en el polvo, sino ardiente
símbolo en bronce, espíritu y materia,
encarnación del genio de la raza
a quien perpetuamente se venera!
..."[23]

In this poem Roa Bastos positions himself <u>within</u> a particular and -as it turned out- failed project to resolve the national political crisis-from above ('aurora y cumbre') as a writer of state mythology. The text's principal rhetorical strategy is its desire to <u>solidify</u> the memory of the 'champion', Estigarribia, within the dominant political imaginary, and to preserve it 'perpetuamente' (like the dictator's mythicical 'Circular' in <u>Yo el Supremo</u>). Being addressed to all 'Paraguayos' in the period of national and ideological fragmentation I have briefly described above, the military figure the poem is dedicated to acts as a kind of binding social cement. For this reason the poet makes the 'héroe' of the Chaco War an exemplary and durable 'símbolo de <u>bronce</u>'. On the other hand, the national figure's longevity cannot merely be represented as being the property of dead matter, existing completely outside the Paraguayan subjects Roa Bastos is concerned with. Thus it is also deified. The memory of Estigarribia becomes an 'espíritu' whom the population should -having knelt- 'venerate'. Dead, Estigarribia, the poem says, will be ever-present, an 'objective' and 'subjective' integrating national symbol represented here in its most statist of forms. But not only does the writer position himself. Insofar as the political elegy -a kind of 'state sentimentalism'- is highly inflexible as a genre, setting

rigid limits at all levels of language (the poem's contents thus reproduce its form), there is a very real sense in which it might be argued that he is also positioned by the very literary form he has chosen. In this sense it may be said that Roa Bastos, as a young up-and-coming writer, was no more -and no less- than a political stand-in, restating the already said.

When he was <u>critical</u>, however, there was apparently no space for him at all within the national culture, except for that of exile. Traditionally a location for the production of critical literature in Latin America, particularly in Paraguay, as we shall see below, exile can also be the place of nostalgia[24] and mistaken -in the following case, over-zealous- political judgements. In 1954, signalling the beginning of the end of the political crisis in Paraguay, Stroessner came to power. Initially, amongst the exile community in Argentina there was confusion as to the possible nature of his rule and many, who had left in 1947, returned thinking that he possibly represented either a Paraguayan version of Perón, or at least an end to the long period of political turmoil. They were mistaken. As was Roa Bastos, who wrote another hagiographic poem celebrating Perón's visit to Paraguay -at the height of his own unpopularity- soon after Stroessner's military coup:

"Los soldados austeros,
surgidos marcialmente de sus pueblos,
son héroes de esta paz y de esta unión:
STROESSNER Y PERÓN...!
Del Alto Paraná donde la vida
torrencial como el río

se agiganta en los zumos de la tierra
trae el primero su sabor de pueblo,
su vivienda sustancia nacional
su condición telúrica de raza
y su fé campesina en el trabajo
que hace el orden fecundo de la vida.
...
Él conoce el dolor y el sacrificio
de su pueblo
en la paz y en la guerra,
y siente su esperanza,
y ha de llevarlo
hacia la meta de su escudo
con su lema de Paz y de Justicia
para todos..."[25]

Since the rhetorical strategy of this later poem is very similar to that of ¡No llores patria!, I do not think it is worth analysing here, except to say that it seems to have been hurriedly written as a means to the quite transparent end of conjunctural state glorification, and to note its references to both Argentine (Perón) and Paraguayan (Stroessner) political contexts, prefiguring, albeit in a diferent way, the dual social and national inscription of Yo el Supremo. My purpose, morever, is not to point out political errors, but rather to register how the crisis of the oligarchic state in the region touched Roa Bastos in contradictory ways -radical anti-fascism on the one hand, and conservative statism on the other-, and gradually, to draw out of these events the regional significance of Yo el Supremo. With regard to the latter, the transformations in the area, particularly the emergence of a populist anti-oligarchic political culture, mark the appearance of a potential audience for his later novel, especially in Argentina. At the same time, during this period of crisis in oligarchic hegemony and populist rupture, the state and

political legitimation as such -in other words, the state/'people' relation of Latin American republicanism (and subsequently of populism)- emerges as a literary object of concern, particularly as it is embodied -for example in Roa Bastos' texts above- in historical figures that are supposedly representative of the 'people' and the nation in moments of crisis. Even though of a very different political complexion, Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, transformed by Roa Bastos into El Supremo, is another such figure.

Despite this apparent continuity, however, there is a crucial difference between the logics of production of the above two poems and Yo el Supremo, which places the novel closer to those critical texts of 1947 that contributed to the author's exile. For if the logic of the poems is defined by their subordination to the discourse of the state, making them administrative cultural artefacts, the political logic of Yo el Supremo, like his first novel Hijo de Hombre, can best be thought of in relation to another, contrary, political term: solidarity (with the 'people'). As we shall see, however, insofar as the novel traces the collapse of the discourse of a -relatively progressive- state immanently, and because of its insistence on its own specificity as a literary work (through recourse, for example, to anti-instrumentalist strategems of avant-gardist fragmentation[26]), this is only the case negatively. And this, in turn, is what differentiates Yo el Supremo from

Hijo de Hombre. For if in the latter -where 'great men' do not really appear at all- the betrayal of the 'people' by a frustrated petty-bourgeois intellectual -Miguel Vera- is dramatised by the positivity of such exemplary popular characters as Cristóbal Jara (as actor) and Macario (as narrator), this is not the case in Yo el Supremo where- despite the reappearance of the theme of betrayal by an intellectual, in this case El Supremo himself- the 'popular' remains an open (non-exemplary) signifier of the possible.[27]

Before turning to look at the significance of Yo el Supremo in an increasingly radicalised anti-oligarchic political culture during the late 1960's and early 1970's, however, it is important to note (1) how the novel addresses the relations between Paraguay and Argentina in the post-independence period which saw the emergence of the Liberal state in the region, and (2) some of the effects of the particular form this relation takes on Paraguayan literary culture.

CHAPTER TWO

"...SI EL SUR ES NUESTRO NORTE": THE WAR OF THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE.

> "Protesta haber venido con el solo objeto de promover su felicidad. Engancha un bagre ya frito en el anzuelo; lanza la línea al arroyo Takuary; se queda a la espera con la caña en una mano, la llave de oro del librecambio titilando en la otra. La virtud de la llave es que sea aperativa, la virtud del gancho es que enganche. Los jefes paraguayos, boquiabiertos, quedaron enganchados. El jefe tabaquero ve entre los reflejos la suerte nutritiva. ¡Esto es bueno, pero muy bueno!, comenta con sus secuaces. A qué más guerra si el Sur es nuestro Norte. Alucinación general. Meta parlotear con el triunfante derrotado... ¡Aquí no hubo vencedores ni vencidos!... Belgrano tiene agarrados de las agallas a los vencedores... Ofrece unión, libertad, igualdad, fraternidad a los paraguayos; franco-liberal comercio de todos los productos de su provincia con las del Río de la Plata... Todos comen el bagre convertido en dorado. Todos a una fuman la pipa de la paz." (117-118)

This passage is taken from the 'Circular perpetua' El Supremo dictates to his secretary Patiño, the 'modality of writing' -as Milagros Ezquerro calls the different forms taken by the the novel's discourse- that arguably occupies the centre of the work.[28] It is a historical narrative which, however, is constantly interrupted and commented upon by others. It is also the most explicitly rhetorical part of the text. El Supremo dictates it in response to the threatening 'pasquín' that opens the novel, and in doing so narrates the emergence and consolidation -the 'birth'- of the independent Paraguayan nation-state: "¿De qué me acusan

estos anónimos papelarios? ¿De haber dado a este pueblo una Patria libre, independiente, soberana?...¿De haberla defendido desde su nacimiento contra los embates de sus enemigos de dentro y de fuera? ¿De esto me acusan?...Es preciso reflexionar sobre estos grandes hechos que ustedes seguramente ignoran, para valorar en todos sus alcances la importancia, la justeza, la perennidad de nuestra Causa." (37). The 'circular' is addressed to "...los Delegados, Comandantes de Guarnición y de Urbanos, Jueces Comisionados, Administradores, Mayordomos, Receptores Fiscales, Alcabaleros y demás autoridades."(36). In other words the administrators of the state apparatus -of whom El Supremo says: "Casi todos ustedes son veteranos servidores. La mayoría sin embargo no ha tenido tiempo de instruirse a fondo sobre estas cuestiones de nuestra Historia, atados a las tareas del servicio."(38). The purpose of the narrative is to persuade his readers as to the virtue of his national project ('nuestra causa'), and to instruct them as to their history.

The particular section (or chapter) from which the passage is taken is one of the most important of the work. In it El Supremo tells his readers how he mapped out a project for building an independent and <u>popular</u> nation-state (thereby establishing a <u>new</u> kind of political community) and for defending it against the Spanish Crown and its powerful neighbours to the East and South. "¡Aquí, en el Paraguay, la Tierra Firme es la firme voluntad del

pueblo de hacer libre su tierra desde hoy y para siempre! La única cuestión a decidir es cómo debemos defender los paraguayos nuestra soberanía e independencia contra España, contra Lima, contra Buenos Aires, contra el Brasil, contra toda potencia extranjera que pretenda sojuzgarnos...Saqué mis dos pistolas. He aquí mis argumentos: Uno contra Fernando VII. Otro contra Buenos Aires", he quotes himself as saying in 1810 at a meeting of 'doscientos notables' gathered to decide what to do after the declaration of independence in Buenos Aires earlier that year(105). His motion was defeated as the majority of 'notables' decided to remain loyal to the Spanish Crown. "Poco iba a durarles el triunfo. Yo me llevé el huevo de la Revolución para que empollara en el momento oportuno."(106), he dictates. El Supremo's readers are thus taken back to the period immediately preceding Paraguayan independence. It is at this moment that the new ruling Junta in Buenos Aires decides to send an expeditionary force to the 'province' of Paraguay to ensure its adherence to the cause of independence that had originated in the capital of the ex-Viceroyalty of the River Plate. It was led by Manuel Belgrano. El Supremo continues:

> "Por aquel tiempo vino Manuel Belgrano al frente de un ejército. Abogado, intelectual, pese a su profunda convicción independentista, vino a cumplir las órdenes de la Junta de Buenos Aires: Meter por la fuerza al Paraguay en el rodeo vacuno de las provincias pobres. Vino con esas intenciones que en un primer fermento debió de haber creído que eran justas. Vino Belgrano acolorado por ese vino de imposibles. Como en otras ocasiones, vino acompañado él también por esa legión de malvados migrantes; los eternos partidarios de la anexión, que sirvieron entonces, que sirvieron después, como

> baqueanos en las invasiones a su Patria. Vino hecho vinagre."(114)

In relating these events, the dictator parodically resorts to two works of history: Julio César Chaves's El Supremo Dictador. Biografía de José Gaspar de Francia (1942) and Bartolomé Mitre's Historia de Belgrano y de la Independencia Argentina (1886), written, as the dates suggest, long after the death of Dr. Francia in 1840. Indeed, as El Supremo points out, the very next paragraph quotes Belgrano as he is quoted, "de puño y letra", by Mitre (whom he calls "el Tácito de la Plata"). Once on Paraguayan territory Belgrano, 'hecho vinagre', writes to inform the Junta in Buenos Aires:

> "He llegado a este punto con poco más de quinientos hombres, y me hallo al frente del enemigo fuerte de unos cinco mil hombres y según otros de nueve mil. Desde que atravesé el Tebicuary no se me ha presentado ni un paraguayo voluntario, ni menos los he hallado en sus casas, según nos habían asegurado los informes...esto, unido al ningún movimiento hecho hasta ahora a nuestro favor, y antes por el contrario, presentarse en tanto número para oponérsenos, le obliga al ejército de mi mando a decir que su título no debe ser de auxiliador sino de conquistador del Paraguay."(114)[29]

Belgrano's expedition failed. Or -and this is Mitre's argument- did it? Militarily, he says, the expedition was a disaster. Politically, however, he pompously asserts that "Los copiosos documentos de que hemos valido para escribir esta página de la vida de Belgrano, prueba que él fué el verdadero autor de la revolución del Paraguay, y que a su ...habilidad como diplomático, ya que no a su perecia como general, fueron debidos exclusivamente los felices

resultados políticos que dió esta desastrosa campaña..."; that is, Paraguayan independence.[30] After the battle of Tacuary, in which Belgrano's troops were definitely defeated, "Paraguayos y porteños fraternizan...aún enrojecidos de sangre", says El Supremo quoting Julio César (Chaves), who adds, echoing Mitre's (and El Supremo's!) text himself: "Y así, paradojalmente, el general derrotado se ha convertido en el diplomático vencedor. Belgrano no pierde tiempo, y ofrece al jefe paraguayo abrir una negociación para probar que no quiso conquistar a la provincia, sino promoverle su felicidad. Cavañas (the Paraguayan 'jefe') se muestra dispuesto a escuchar sus proposiciones y aquél las enuncia: *paz, unión, entera confianza, franco y liberal comercio de todos los frutos de la provincia del Paraguay, incluso el tabaco, con las del Río de la Plata, y particularmente con Buenos Aires.*"[31]

This complex interweaving of texts in El Supremo's discourse reveals his reliance on the discourse of others so as to formulate his own. It also, of course, underlines the compositional principle of compilation on which the novel is based: El Supremo is also, it seems, a 'compilador'. As we have already noted, the discourse of the 'circular' is prompted by El Supremo's desire to defend the political process of which he has been in charge, and its purpose is to educate his state administrators as to the origins of Paraguay as an independent nation-state. In doing so, it now becomes clear that his discourse is also directed in

another way. As he narrates the history of the nation, he confronts and polemicises with other historical narratives, in this case with Mitre's Historia de Belgrano. This makes El Supremo's words, although dictated and thus apparently entirely univocal, in fact thoroughly dialogical. In Bakhtin's phrase, his words are 'words with a sidewards glance' - which means that they are simultaneously referential and addressed. And this is not only with regard to the administrators of his state in the 'present' of his word's dictation, but also to texts -and their writers and readers-in the 'future': "es bueno que se enteren...mis sátrapas de hoy. Los de ayer. Los de mañana."(121).[32] El Supremo thus 'speaks' to the administrators of the Paraguayan State, whilst simultaneously 'glancing' at the advancing Porteño landed and commercial bourgeoisie and at the history of the nation-state being forged and written, amongst others, by Bartolomé Mitre. Hence his allusion to the Junta's aim to "Meter por la fuerza al Paraguay en el *rodeo vacuno* de las provincias pobres." (my emphasis) For the dictator, Paraguay is not a 'province' -the symptomatic reappearance of colonial language within post-colonial discourse- to be incorported into an emerging Argentina, but a nation-state *with a history* of its own.

The significance of the passage with which I began this section now begins to emerge. For El Supremo is involved, not only in a political struggle for Paraguayan independence, but also in a struggle for the interpretation

of the region's history. Indeed, in Yo el Supremo, Roa Bastos stages a polemic between two of the principal master narratives of Latin American modernity: on the one hand, the narrative of authoritarian liberalism ('civilización')[33]- represented here by Mitre- and, on the other, what will later emerge as the nationalist anti-liberal narratives of the 1930's and after -repesented here, of course, by El Supremo. In this particular context the reader is confronted with opposing readings of the process of Paraguayan independence. For Mitre, as is quite plain, the country's independence was an Argentine initiative: soon after the defeat of Belgrano's expedition, and influenced by the offer of free trade with Buenos Aires, those involved on the Paraguayan side overthrew the Spanish authorities in Asunción; in El Supremo's words, "Los jefes paraguayos, boquiabiertos, quedaron enganchados." In his view, however, the struggle for national independence involves, not only the overthrow of Spanish colonial rule, but also resisting the political and economic pressure from Buenos Aires for annexation. Hence the need for a different interpretation. If, indeed, according to El Supremo the "jefes paraguayos...se quedaron enganchados", seduced by "la llave de oro del librecambio", this does not thereby empty them, as it does in Mitre's interpretation, of historical agency. In other words, the 'jefe tabaquero' had to be interested in 'biting'. And when they did, they made sure that they were equal partners in the trade deal, so much so that El Supremo points out that the armistice went against "los objetivos de

la invasión anexionista y a los intereses de Buenos Aires."(118). This, of course, is why the dictator also has internal enemies: the "partido de los tabaqueros, yerbateros y estancieros uniformados"(118). The purpose of El Supremo's political and interpretative struggle, therefore, is to ensure that in the very moment of independence, Paraguayan sovereignty is not undermined by the interests of the 'jefes paraguayos' -"la contrarrevolución liberticida"(120)- who, although not identical to their 'porteño' counterparts, share similar, potentially dangerous interests. It is for this reason that in the 'circular' the story of El Supremo's rise to power and his securing of 'real' independence is also the story of his battle against such Paraguayan 'jefes'.[34]

It is clear now that 'el Tácito de la Plata' (Mitre) constitutes a sign of the region's history that pulls El Supremo's discourse into the future, beyond the historical parameters of the dictatorship of Dr. Francia. But its relevance is not exhausted by this particular interpretative polemic -although it is what especially occupies El Supremo's concern. There are, furthermore, two brief moments when another aspect of Mitre's political career comes to the fore, which are of special interest with regard to a subsequent period of Paraguayan history and which, no doubt, sharpen the dictator's -and Roa Bastos's- polemic against him. El Supremo notes, more or less in passing:

> "También tú invadirás nuestra patria; luego te pondrás a traducir tranquilamente la Divina Comedia invadiendo los círculos avernales del Alighieri...¡Ah Tácito-Brigadier! Consideras indispensable el misterio como regla de gobierno (El tratado secreto de la Triple Alianza contra el Paraguay lo cocinaste entre medios gallos y media noche)."(119)

These comments on Mitre take us to another moment of Paraguayan and Argentine history: the War of the Triple Alliance (1865-1870). Indeed, although hardly foregrounded in the novel, it is around this war and its subsequent effects that Paraguayan history -and historiography- very much revolves, both as regards the nation's socio-economic structures and a significant part of its cultural production. The point is that Bartolomé Mitre was President of Argentina and Commander of its armed forces from 1862 to 1868. Domingo F. Sarmiento was his successor (1868- 1874).

According to the Swiss military historian Jurg Meister, the War of the Triple Alliance was the first modern <u>total war</u>.[35] The combined armed forces of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay invaded Paraguay after Paraguayan troops attempted to put a halt to Brazilian intervention in the internal politics of Uruguay and thereby, like El Supremo, try to ensure access down the river to external markets for local products. To do so, the dictator of Paraguay, Marshall Francisco Solano López, ordered his troops across Argentine territory after permission had been refused by Mitre's government in Buenos Aires. This proved to be the opportunity to definitely settle scores with an independent

Paraguay. The main reason for the campaign given by the allied forces was getting rid of the López 'tyranny'. In fact, however, a secret treaty signed by these nations was made public by The Times revealing their intention to exact huge amounts of war damages -including a considerable part of Paraguayan territory. It is to this -as it turns out- 'revenge' of the liberal Porteño bourgeoisie that El Supre mo is referring above. By the end of the war, Paraguay had lost approximately one half of its population.[36] It is knowledge of this that gives reading El Supremo's own text -the 'circular perpetua'- both a hint of tragic irony and, nevertheless, a certain relevance.

There have been many interpretations of the factors involved in unleashing this war and its historical significance for the area. Most studies, however, tend to focus their attention on only one of these which, if it cannot be 'blamed', can at least be presented as the cause. These range from López's Napoleonic designs on the region and his 'lust for power', to the interests of British banking in conjunction with those of the Empire to search out new supplies of cotton after the Civil War in the U.S.A., or to the expansionist interests of the landowners of the Rio Grande do Sud.[37] Since I cannot reconstruct the whole process here, nor adequately comment on all of these interpretations, I shall firstly note the war's significance insofar as the formation of the Argentine liberal nation-state is concerned and, secondly, outline its principal

effects in Paraguay by briefly looking at how these are represented in Hijo de Hombre. This will then take us back in my next chapter to Roa Bastos himself -via the work of the Spanish anarchist, Rafael Barrett- writing Yo el Supremo in Buenos Aires.

The concentration on López's personal traits, or on the machinations of British Imperialism, or even on the economic interests of the landowners from Rio Grande do Sud, although surely important, tends to blind many analyses to the Argentine dimension of the war. More recent work by David Viñas, Tulio Halperín Donghi and Oscar Oszlak, for example, whilst not specifically about what in Argentina is called the 'Paraguayan War', foreground its importance in the long process leading to the definitive formation of the Liberal State -by which they mean the particular realisation of the political and cultural project outlined in the work of D.F. Sarmiento and his generation (which included Mitre) during the rule of Juan Manuel de Rosas.[38] The overthrow of the latter in 1852 did not result in the immediate unification of the country, but rather its renewed fragmentation as native Indian societies and the caudillos of the interior renewed their own struggles to defend their interests against an expanding agrarian capitalism and the political dominance of Buenos Aires (which for the native Indian population was experienced, according to Viñas, as an extension of the Spanish conquest). This process was not complete until after the Guerra del Desierto against the

native Índian population of the Patagonia and the subsequent election of General Julio Roca as President in 1880:

> "La civilización liberal-burguesa, condensada programáticamente en el Facundo de Sarmiento treinta y cinco años antes, avanzaba de manera arrolladora sobre 'los espacios vacíos'...Por eso es que, en este sentido, las luchas con los indios de la Patagonia (y del Chaco) deben ser vistas como una complementación de la guerra contra los paraguayos y frente a los caudillos federales. Choele-Choel clausura el circuito abierto en Olta y dramatizado al máximo en Cerro Corá (the names of battles in this 'civilising' process -the latter being the place where López was hunted down and killed by the Brazilian forces, thereby ending the War of the Triple Alliance in 1870. J.K.). Esa secuencia no sólo ratifica el proyecto-liberal burgués de homogeneización del escenario político -dentro del cual guaraníes, montoneros y pampas ostentaban una imagen parecida de 'hombres desnudos, primitivos y racionalmente ineptos'- sino de intenso fortalecimiento de un poder central."[39]

These military confrontations with those 'others' deemed to be barriers to this 'civilising mission' also served the liberal bourgeoisie to consolidate its own emergent hegemony. During the War of the Triple Alliance, for example, the state was able to strengthen its repressive apparatus -forming a unified, professional standing army- and make its presence felt throughout its territory through forced recruitment. Monetary unity was also enhanced through the centralised collection of taxes to finance the war effort. Finally, the war also legitimised cracking down on federalist rebellion in the interior, for example against the caudillos 'Chacho' Peñaloza and Felipe Varela, thus forging political unity too. Thus the state, whilst on the one hand becoming increasingly centralised, on the other disseminated its influence throughout that territory which

was becoming 'national'. According to David Rock: "...Mitre was successful in using war to consolidate national unity. The war with Paraguay between 1865 and 1870 both revived the flagging new order in Argentina and also eliminated one of the major threats to its survival and aggrandizement."[40]

But in what sense could Paraguay have constituted a threat to Argentina's survival? During the dictatorships of José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, and his succesors Carlos Antonio López and Francisco Solano López, the country experienced a form of economic development which attracted many of the caudillos of the Argentine interior, and in doing so was perceived as a threat to an Argentine unification dominated by the Porteño liberal bourgeoisie.[41] Indeed, important Argentine intellectuals who were not aligned with Buenos Aires, for example Juan Bautista Alberdi (by then representative of the Argentine Confederation in Europe) and José Hernández (the writer of Martín Fierro) added their own voices to that of the likes of Varela and were openly critical of the war.

In contrast to the provinces of the Argentine interior, whose local economies were very quickly undermined by cheap imports from England, the Paraguayan economy actually prospered between 1813 and 1865. This was due primarily to the state's protection of local production and its control of all international trade. During the regime of Dr.

Francia, whose principal social base of support were the peasant 'chacreros', the economic power of an incipient commercial bourgeoisie that favoured free trade was either eroded through taxation and fines, or marginalised. He also created state farms ('estancias de la patria') whose land was used for cattle rearing or rented to small peasant farmers. Rent was paid in kind and all surpluses distributed to the needy or spent on arms -so even the national market was hardly monetarised. Although the economy remained fairly stagnant during Francia's time in power, in relative terms the material needs of most of the population were taken care of. These basic economic structures were strengthened by the López governments that followed. There were two important differences however: firstly, an opening up to foreign investment in infrastructural developments, manufacture and technology- the building of an iron works and a railway. This process of modernisation -which is what represented the threat to Buenos Aires- remained, however, under state control. Secondly -and this is what differentiates the López's rule from Francia's- a process of enrichment and aristocratisation of the López family.[42]

The War of the Triple Alliance put an end to this period of 'autonomous' growth, effectively turning the country's economic structures <u>inside out</u>. Henceforth, Paraguay <u>became</u> a hinterland of alternatively both Brazil and Argentina.[43] Between 1870 and 1904 the foundations of a new oligarchic

state were laid through the massive sale of state land creating the latifundio/minifundio landholding pattern which still structures Paraguayan agrarian capitalism to this day. Thus, unlike similar 'liberal revolutions' throughout Latin America, it was not church and native Indian land that was the direct object of expropriation and transfer in Paraguay, but the property of the state itself (although Indian land was effected since it was effectively the state's, whilst church land had been expropriated during the radical dictatorship of Dr. Francia). The dominant political parties of the country also emerged in this period -the Liberal Party (formed by exiles from the previous regimes- "esa legión de malvados migrantes"(114)- who had organised the 'Legión Paraguaya' within the invading Argentine forces) and the Colorado Party ('Asociación Nacional Republicana')- and after a brief period of Liberal Party rule, it was- ironically, given its subsequent epic nationalist ideology- the Colorado Party that pushed through the traditionally 'liberal' policy of selling off state lands -mainly to Anglo-Argentine companies. This thirty year period of Colorado rule is officially known as the 'reconstrucción nacional', and was dominated by Bernardino Caballero -a major shareholder in the 'Industrial Paraguaya', one of the major landowners after the land sale, and founder of the Colorado Party. In this way, between 1870 and 1904 the economic and political structures of the country were completely transformed, creating a nation dependent on the dependency of others (Argentina and Brazil).

There are two images in Roa Bastos's Hijo de Hombre which may be read productively in relation to this restructuring of Paraguay's mode of insertion into the world market. The first is the railway. Omar Díaz de Arce briefly traces its history as a metaphor of Paraguay's transformation:

> "La historia del ferrocarril es la historia del triunfo de la reacción sobre el progreso económico y social en el Paraguay. Cuando el país era todavía una República soberana, hace cien años, construyó Carlos Antonio López, utilizando un batallón de soldados, el más antiguo ferrocarril del Plata, entre Asunción y Paraguarí. La vía fue extendida en 1886 a Villa Rica y en 1911 a Encarnación. Dos años más tarde, fue conectada a la red argentina. Así quedó unida Asunción a Buenos Aires por tierra."[44]

In his 1920 Preface to the French and German editions of Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Lenin also underlines at a more general level the importance of railways in the world-wide expansion and integration of capitalism:

> "Railways are a summation of the basic capitalist industries: coal, iron and steel; a summation and the most striking indices of the development of world trade and bourgeois-democratic civilization ... The uneven distribution of the railways, their uneven development -sums up, as it were, modern monopolist capitalism on a world-wide scale."

He goes on to call them "capitalist threads, which in thousands of different intercrossings bind these enterprises with private property in (the) means of production", and which, he continues, "have converted this railway construction into an instrument for oppressing a thousand million people...inhabiting the dependent countries...".[45]

In Hijo de Hombre the railway appears as just such a 'summation' of bourgeois civilisation: "Las vías férreas avanzaban sobre el tendido abriendo una roja rajadura por el valle" narrates a nostalgic Vera, "Itapé iba a desperezarse de su siesta de siglos, pero el pueblo volvía a dividirse en dos bandos irreconciliables haciendo que el jefe político y el cura recobraran su aflojado poder."[46] Thus the change brought by a new 'civilization' to Itape only serves to reconfirm traditional structures of power. In the novel, furthermore, the railway functions as a circuit 'binding' together many of the work's main characters and 'intercrossing' their fictional destinies: "...la vida de Macario (y tal vez la de Itapé) se termina con la aparición del ferrocarril; la historia de Sapukai (y la de la familia Jara) empieza con el ferrocarril; el ferrocarril, el mismo tren, es el que lleva Miguel Vera a Asunción y el que trae al Doctor a Sapukai."[47] It is as if the railway traces the line along which the work's interconnecting narratives (the 'threads' of the text) are written. Including its dramas. For the railway is also the site of political and cultural conflict in Hijo de Hombre: in the town of Sapukai, popular rebel forces are blown to pieces with many of the town's population as they prepare to board a train because government forces, informed of their plans, have sent another train down the track packed with explosives. Another episode emerges from this event, however, which is extremely enigmatic for the narrator and military man Vera. Casiano Jara and his wife Nati, survivors of the explosion at

Sapukai and the yerba mate plantations, return to the town and appropriate a railway wagon for their own purposes, thus inscribing it into a cultural script which Vera cannot comprehend. This is because the family's act of appropriation breaks those very codes ('leyes') that guide his interpretation: "Pero el hecho absurdo estaba en que todavía podía andar, alejarse, desaparecer, violando todas las leyes de propiedad, de gravedad, de sentido común."(158) Casiano, aided by his wife and marginalised "merodeadores, vagabundos, parias perseguidos y fugitivos"(159) domesticates the wagon (the chapter is called 'Hogar') and pushes it across the desert into the jungle, making his own tracks. Going against the grain of the bourgeois culture of progress represented by the railway, Casiano's wagon "retrocedía hacia el pasado", says Vera. The family's de-territorialisation (or 'unbinding') of these 'capitalist threads', breaking all its laws, thus provokes a crisis in Vera's interpretation, foregrounding one of Hijo de Hombre's central dramas: the story of an alienated narrator's failed search for meaning.

The second sign of Paraguay's underdevelopment in Hijo de Hombre is the yerba mate plantation (the 'yerbales') from which Casiano Jara, his wife and their young son (Cristóbal Jara) escape. The 'yerbales' have been one of the main themes of Paraguayan literature, or rather the process of peasant dispossession and their 'enganche' to work in them. Apart from the chapter 'Éxodo' in Roa Bastos's Hijo de

Hombre, the most important works in this regard would include Juan Natalicio González's La raíz errante (1952) and José María Rivarola Matto's Follaje en los ojos (1952). The rapid process of primitive accumulation set in motion by privatisation after the War of the Triple Alliance led to the re-organisation of 'yerba' production under the control of private companies -mainly Brazilian and Argentine- and the creation of a pool of 'free' labour. Perhaps one of the most interesting things about Roa Bastos's chapter that we can note here is that it is evidently a re-writing, a fictionalisation, of the classical text written about these plantations: Rafael Barrett's polemic Lo que son los yerbales, written in five instalments and published in the Asunción newspaper El Diario between 15 and 27 June, 1908. In his articles, Barrett revealed for the first time the almost slave-like labour conditions in the 'yerbales', where the human species had been bestialised and reduced to, in his words, a "horda de alcohólicos y sifilíticos" -and from where, later, in Roa Bastos's novel, Casiano and his family would escape.[48]

Rafael Barrett was a Spanish anarchist who arrived in Asunción in 1904. He wrote prolifically for newspapers of the region until his death in 1910. Influenced by naturalism, and writing from a utopian ethical point of view, he represented modernisation and progress as a process of social and moral decay -which, at least in part, explains the language he used to describe conditions in the

'yerbales' (he was also brought up amongst the lower Spanish aristocracy). That Roa Bastos recovered Barrett for Paraguayan literature in Buenos Aires, where he wrote Hijo de Hombre, is symptomatic not only of uneven development in the region but also of the fate of Barrett's texts -at least until 1989, when his Obras Completas were at last published in a new edition in Asunción. In effect, although published regularly in Asunción until 1908, when he was briefly detained after a coup d'etat,[49] Barrett's work soon began to drift towards Buenos Aires and Montevideo, the River Plate metropoli. Before he died, a collection of his essays on Paraguay were published by an anarchist publishing house in Montevideo. In 1914, an issue of the Buenos Aires-based anarchist publication Protesta included his work, most of which had been published by then in slim cheap volumes, amongst the recommended reading for their public -along with such writers as Zola, Marx, Kropotkin etc.. Indeed, he was the only writer included in their list who even wrote about Latin America at all. The first edition of his Obras Completas were published years later -in the 1940's- in Buenos Aires. And it was here during the 1940's and 1950's that exiled Paraguayan writers such as Roa Bastos, Herib Campos Cervera and Elvio Romero rediscovered his work.[50]

There are three basic reasons for this drift in the distribution and reception of Barrett's work. Firstly, the rapid process of urbanisation that took place in the cities of Buenos Aires and Montevideo between 1880 and 1920,

coupled with mass immigration, provided anarchist writing with an audience and a more congenial receptive context for his work. Secondly, the lack of such a process in Paraguay -devestated by the War of the Triple Alliance- where modernisation (or capitalist development) was not accompanied by urbanisation. Indeed, its most obvious sign were precisely the 'yerbales', located far from Asunción. This meant that the popular audience Barrett wrote for in the capital city was very small or else dispersed in the country-side. Many also, it should be remembered, were not speakers nor readers of the Spanish language -most workers in the plantations were of native Indian origin or Guaraní speaking peasants. Finally, within Paraguayan intellectual circles there was very little interest in reading or writing about the matters that concerned Barrett. Although many recognised his 'literary' merit, after the War of the Triple Alliance most writers were either concerned with historically justifying the nation's international borders or, most importantly, with reconstructing a mythical national history and identity. Barrett's writing- highlighting social conflict and decay- and his political internationalism were thus overshadowed by the dominant class's desire to fabricate a myth of national unity.

One of the most interesting examples of this post-War oligarchic nationalism is an essay by Manuel Domínguez called "Causas del Heroísmo Paraguayo", originally presented as a conference paper at the Instituto Paraguayo in Asunción

in January, 1903 -a little over one year before Barrett arrived inthe country. In this essay, Domínguez attempts to account for the stubborn and fierce bravery shown by the Paraguayan population during the War of the Triple Alliance. Dismissing those interpretations that sought explanations in the Paraguayans' 'fear' of López, or even in their 'savagery', Domínguez argues for a 'causa interna'. That is, he presents a racial argument. He says, quite bluntly, that the Paraguayans were <u>whiter</u> than their enemies, that they were 'white mestizos': "Aquel mestizo en la cruza sucesiva se fue haciendo blanco a su manera...". The mixture of "el noble fuerte" from Spain and the "guaraní que era sufrido" produced "el mestizo que no era el de otras partes"(!). He then articulates this positivistic biologism to a romantic history of Paraguay reconstructed as "tres siglos de guerra": "*Agredido* o *agresor*...juega la vida en cada recodo del camino donde lo espera el golpe de la flecha o el zarpazo del tigre...Sin contar los combates...contra el jesuita, contra los obispos, contra los autoridades reales ...". In this way, Domínguez puts together a (heroic) racial myth of identity, the contemporary proof of which he locates precisely in those 'yerbales' criticised five years later by Barrett:

> "Y como sufre dolores el paraguayo soporta trabajos que matan al extranjero. El peón de ahora, medio anímico o anímico entero, algunas veces alcoholizado, como no le falta el *locro* es de una increíble resistencia. Sólo el paraguayo puede con el pesado trabajo de los yerbales y del obraje. ¿Dónde recluta sus peones La Compañía Matte Larangeira? En el Paraguay. Aquello revienta a cualquiera que no sea paraguayo."[51]

In the context exemplified by this work it is not surprising that Barrett did not have a local audience amongst the intellectual elite at the time, and that his texts suffered (and enjoyed) their own kind of exile in the region's metropoli. As against Domínguez's celebration of the conditions in the 'yerbales', Barrett portrays -for the nationalists- an unpalatable picture of oppression and degradation.[52] And years later, Roa Bastos, in his own Argentine exile, will re-write Barrett's critique: in Hijo de Hombre he inverts Domínguez's version by representing Casiano, Nati and their son's escape from the 'yerbales' as heroic.

This meeting of Barrett's and Roa Bastos's texts in Buenos Aires tells us, I think, something crucial about Paraguayan literary culture: that its most critical literary production has been an exiled or, in Alejandro Losada's term, an 'internationalised' literature,[53] paradoxically read (in Barrett's case -at least until recently) and written (in Roa Bastos's case) in a city whose own history has had such a devastating effect on Paraguay itself. Thus, tragically, as far as this kind of literature is concerned, "el Sur" has been "nuestro Norte" -despite the efforts of El Supremo.[54]

*

Before turning to look at the conjunctural moment of Yo el Supremo's writing in Argentina during the late 1960's and early 1970's, it may be useful to briefly review the most

important and, as we shall see, relevant aspects of the political, literary and biographical histories I have traced so far. In the first section, I have attempted to relate the intertwining political histories of Paraguay and Argentina during a period of crisis of the oligarchic liberal state associated with the rise of populism. We have seen that it was at this moment that Roa Bastos left Paraguay for Argentina where, subsequently, he was to write the narratives for which he is most well-known: Hijo de Hombre and Yo el Supremo. I have also noted, however, how this crisis affected the author in contradictory ways. In some of his less well-known writing during the period (1940's and early 1950's) we find, on the one hand, that he was writing anti-dictatorial theatre and journalism -for which he originally went into exile- and, on the other, a 'state sentimentalist' poetry which reflected a concern for heroic individuals representing possible resolutions to the crisis in the Paraguayan state: Estigarribia and Stroessner. In sum, I have attempted to show how the state -embodied in such characters- emerges as an object of Roa Bastos's literary concern.

This complex intertwining of Argentine and Paraguayan history was also evident in the second section. In a reading of El Supremo's 'circular perpetua' we have seen a dictator defending his national project in a discourse that is doubly addressed. Firstly, to his state administrators in the 'present' and, secondly, to the Argentine politician

and historiographer Bartolomé Mitre in the future. The importance of this second moment is that Mitre led the War of the Triple Alliance that destroyed Paraguay's 'autonomuous' national development -El Supremo's project- subjecting it to the logic of the liberal project of the Porteno bourgeoisie. It was in this historical period that the states in crisis described in the first section emerged.

At the level of literature, I have attempted to show how the effects of this process subsequently mark, and relate, the works of Rafael Barrett and Roa Bastos. Firstly, we have seen how the railway in Hijo de Hombre becomes the site of Paraguayan dependency, social conflict, and a mode of deterritorialisation the novel's hero, Vera, cannot comprehend. In this respect, the destiny of Rafael Barrett's texts and of Roa Bastos himself mirror, as if in an inversion, Casiano and his family's own. The former end up in the region's metropolis -where the railway begins and ends- whilst the latter abandon 'civilisation' for the 'desert' -and in doing so appropriate a railway wagon, the means of circulation of exchange values, for their own, 'savage', use. Secondly, it is from this very same metropolis, Buenos Aires, that the critique of the 'yerbales' -a direct product of Paraguay's new economic relations introduced by the War of the Triple Alliance, and from which Casiano and his family escape- written by Barrett are recuperated for Paraguayan literature in Hijo de Hombre by Roa Bastos. And it is here where, some years later, at a

time of renewed political crisis, Roa Bastos writes Yo el Supremo.

CHAPTER THREE
AGAINST LIBERALISM.

> "En momentos en que, luego de doblegar un sistema anti-popular y represivo por el hecho de ser precisamente aliado del imperialismo extranjero y las oligarquías locales, cuyos agentes recibieron la certera calificación de fuerzas de ocupación, al igual que en el Uruguay, el Paraguay, el Brasil y algunos otros de nuestros oprimidos países; en momentos en que esta voluntad popular se traduce en actos de su soberano poder, tales como la inmediata liberación de los presos políticos, un hecho histórico de incalculable magnitud, o su definida reubicación entre los países del Tercer Mundo que lucha por su liberación bajo el signo del socialismo revolucionario; en estos momentos de júbilo colectivo indescriptible de este pueblo que ha logrado ganar esta primera batalla con el sacrificio de sus luchadores y de sus mártires...habrán de triunfar a corto o largo plazo. La marea de la segunda emancipación latinoamericana está en marcha. Es arrolladora. Ninguna fuerza de la Tierra puede ya detenerla."[55]

This passage is from a short article written by Roa Bastos in June 1973 -207 years after the birth of Dr. Francia- celebrating the return to the streets of Buenos Aires of the radical Uruguayan magazine Marcha. It is called 'América Latina en MARCHA', and is particularly significant for its recording of Roa Bastos's relation to a series of political and ideological developments in Argentina. Its rhythmic declamatory style ("En momentos...en momentos...en estos momentos...") underlines a sense of political optimism felt by a large sector of the intelligentsia in Buenos Aires at the time, and reflects the growing power of the Left in the way it magnifies and organises the historical events it tells, projecting them on

to an epochal political scenario ("luchan por su liberación bajo el signo del socialismo revolucionario...este pueblo que ha logrado ganar esta primera batalla...sin duda alguna habrían de triunfar... Ninguna fuerza de la Tierra puede ya detenerla."). The passage's language, like the political dynamic it describes, is one of 'liberation' -in which 'popular sovereignty' is waged in a struggle (it even mentions 'sacrifice' and 'martyrs') against the ruling 'oligarchy' and, given that the forces of imperialism are described as an occupyng force, against (neo-)colonialism. It follows that, with the apparent success of the 'popular will' in Argentina, the real possibilities of a new kind of order are on the political agenda. This will involve, Roa Bastos writes, a "segunda emancipación latinoamericana".[56]

At this point it is worth noting the similarity between the language of this text and the following passage from Yo el Supremo which expresses similar desires:

> "Si por ahí, como quien no quiere la cosa, encuentra por azar la huella de la especie a que pertenezco, bórrela. Tape el rastro. Si en alguna grieta perdida encuentra esa cizaña, arránquela de raíz. No se equivocará usted. Debe parecerse a la raíz de una pequeña planta con forma de lagartija, lomo y cola dentados, escamas y ojos de escarcha. Planta-animal de una especie tan fría que apaga el fuego al solo tocarlo. No me equivocaré, mi buen Señor. La conozco muy bien. Surge en todas partes. Se le arranca y vuelve a brotar. Crece. Crece. Se convierte en árbol inmenso. El gigantesco árbol del Poder Absoluto. Alguien viene con el hacha. Lo derriba. Deja un tendal. Sobre el gran aplastamiento crece otro. No acabará esta especie maligna de Sola-Persona hasta que la Persona-Muchedumbre suba en derecho de sí a imponer todo su derecho sobre lo torcido y venenoso de la especie humana. ¡Eh Don Amadeo!

> ¡Habla usted ahora con mis palabras? ¿Me está copiando? ¿O es mi corrector y comentarista el que vuelve a a interrumpir nuestra charla?"(290)

This brief 'natural history', outlined in the dialogue between El Supremo and the captive Amadeo Bonpland, bears witness, in the language of enlightenment naturalism and republican politics, to both a crisis in El Supremo's own rule and the continuity of specific forms of power relations prevalent in Latin America since the period of Independence.[37] Indeed, as figured here, El Supremo projects and generalises an image of his own personalised political power as a kind of prehistoric or mythical monster rampant among a 'people' who have not -even with the overthrow of colonial rule- constituted their own will as general and instituted it as law, and in so doing, undermined the 'twisted tree of Asolute power' at its roots. The relation referred to is, of course, that of <u>dictatorship</u> and, more generally, the post or neo-colonial caudillesque and oligarchic traditions of Latin American political cultures and practices -including both the cult of the strong male leader and the monopolisation of political power and decision making by an elite. El Supremo's own position, however, is curiously ambiguous. This is revealed in the passage's actantial structure. For there is a momentary non-correspondence between the actual site of his enunciation and the content of what is enunciated: whilst El Supremo recognises his own political genealogy as yet another example of the species of the Absolute ("la especie a que pertenezco'), he also suggests that the words criticising

such absolutism in the name of popular right may be his own and not, at least originally, those of either Bonpland or the 'corrector', who may have just copied them ("¿Habla usted ahora con mis palabras? ¿Me está copiando? ¿O es mi corrector...?"). Thus El Supremo -both confronted by Bonpland, the corrector and the constantly evoked 'Pueblo-Muchedumbre', and, by articulating their shared perspective, also allied with them ("arránquela de raíz", he orders)- would seem to be positioned on <u>both sides</u> of the opposition posited in the above two passages between dictatorship and popular emancipation. From this ambiguous position El Supremo articulates a project and a warning. With regard to the project, it would appear that, in effect, the text published in <u>Marcha</u> is a narrative prolongation of the passage from <u>Yo el Supremo</u>, describing the beginnings of the succesful realisation of the political tasks set out there: in 1973 the 'Persona-Muchedumbre' ('el pueblo') seems to be "(subiendo) en derecho de sí a imponer todo su derecho". In other words, these were times in which "luego de doblegar un sistema anti-popular", "esta voluntad popular se traduce en actos de soberano poder". The warning is suggested in the following phrase: "esa cizaña...Surge en todas partes". This takes us to the context in which Roa Bastos wrote <u>Yo el Supremo</u>.

<u>a. The Political Dynamic: the Emergence of Left Peronism</u>.

What was in fact happening to produce "estos momentos de júbilo indescriptible" amongst sectors of the Argentine

population? 'América Latina en MARCHA' is a short text and in it Roa Bastos does not give us many details, although the clues are there. This does not necessarily mean that he was eliding the identities of the main political actors concerned or the concrete political content of the process he was writing about. It rather says something about the context itself and the relation between writer and reader the text stages: 'América Latina en MARCHA' was for immediate consumption in a context of shared political horizons. The text reveals that Roa Bastos was not particularly interested in repeating and narrating the events themselves -the readers, it implies, are already familiar with them- but in articulating their historical significance. This political horizon was, however, historically specific and, as subsequent political developments were to prove (the return of a highly repressive "sistema anti-popular" -the military dictatorship in power from 1976 to 1983), short-lived. As it turned out, Roa Bastos's view of the political situation was, once again, over optimistic. To show that there were, nevertheless, genuine reasons for this optimism at the time it is important to briefly flesh out Roa Bastos's text.

Roa Bastos does mention one important event, which he describes as an "acto de soberano poder". He is referring to the freeing of political prisoners on the day of the inauguration of a new Peronist president -Héctor Cámpora- on 25 May, 1973 -a few days before the publication of 'América

Latina en MARCHA'. An amnesty granted by Cámpora was guaranteed by a march of over 10,000 people -the majority of whom were Peronist Youth militants- on the prison in the suburb of Devoto. The prisoners -including the poet Francisco Urondo- were duly released. The context in which this event takes place is not, however, merely defined by the re-emergence of Peronism as a political force, but rather of the movement's radicalisation, and the emergence of a left-nationalist political culture dominated by a middle class led Left Peronism. It is to this process that I now turn.

Between 1955 and 1966 all attempts to either repress or marginalise Peronism as a political force had failed. In 1955, after two months of equivocation by the nationalist wing of the military coalition that took power after the overthrow of Perón, the stronger liberal faction took control of the situation under the leadership of General Aramburu: "...the assault on Peronism began forthwith. The Peronist Party was dissolved, the CGT (Confederación General de Trabajo) placed under an interventor, and La Prensa (the Peronist newspaper) re-expropriated...Hundreds of union leaders were arrested... new penalties great and small were heaped on the Peronists. Their insignias and slogans were forbidden, as was even the mention of Perón's name."[58] However, this repression only served to strengthen Peronism under the leadership of a younger generation. These organised 'la Resistencia': a series of strikes and a

massive 'vota en blanco' in elections for a constitutional convention which confirmed Peronism's status as the popular majority. So, even though in exile, Perón continued to occupy the centre of the popular political imaginary, holding out the promise of another 'Golden Age' for much of the organised working class. Even the brief civilian governments of Arturo Frondizi and Arturo Illia were handicapped by this power. In June 1966 the military returned, proclaiming the need for a 'regeneración nacional' and making it clear that they would stay in power for some time -'sin plazos'. They called their political project 'La Revolución Argentina'.

It was this military dictatorship that had collapsed seven years later when Roa Bastos wrote 'América Latina en MARCHA', in June 1973. The turning point for the military's attempt to restructure Argentine economic and political life came in 1969. Throughout the 1960's the Peronist trade unions had made various gestures at some form of new accommodation with the state, and even in 1966 Perón himself supported the military coup hoping that with the outlawing of political parties Peronism could become the undisputed representative of labour -underlining once again its corporativist tradition.[39] All these attempts were short-lived. Nevertheless they caused rifts within the trade union and Peronist movements. After a period of relative inaction, by 1968 strike activity began to pick up. The military characteristically responded with violent

repression killing a student in the north of the country. In response the regional CGT called for a general strike on 30 May, 1969. In Córdoba, however, more radical trade unions called for a 'paro activo' the day before. There followed two days of confrontation with the police and armed forces in which industrial workers, white collar employees and students took over the city centre and barricaded the streets. This outbreak of popular mobilisation and protest against the military government has gone down in Argentine history as an important watershed, and is known as the 'Cordobazo'. With it the military's project of restructuring lay in ruins. What surprised the government was that the strikers in Córdoba were amongst the best paid workers in the country, revealing their failure to grasp the wider political and anti-dictatorial concerns that were brought to the fore in the 'Cordobazo' and the similar events it sparked off throughout the country. Indeed, it seemed that, as Ernesto Laclau -also, as it turned out, over optimistically- stated in 1970, "An alliance between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie, with all its explosive potential...was...an irreversible historical fact."[60]

Initially, these events were organised by non-Peronist radical organisations articulating anti-imperialist and socialist demands. Soon, however, they were also to influence younger Peronist militants too, already equipped with a traditional nationalist rhetoric. It was in this

context that the left-Peronist guerrilla group, the Montoneros, made their spectacular appearance on the political scene in 1970 by kidnapping and subsequently executing the former President, General Aramburu. The military's 'Revolución Argentina' was now in full retreat. The following year two generals were replaced and in 1972 General Lanusse -the new President- promised a return to civilian rule. In the event, he was to remain in power for another two years.

By 1972 the armed forces had been drawn into counter-insurgency operations and in Córdoba, for example, socialist trade unionists and student leaders were arrested and the Guevarist guerrilla group, the 'Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo', momentarily contained. The Lanusse regime was also quite successful in ensuring that the Montonero's had only a minimal influence on the trade union movement in Buenos Aires -where the military's fears of insurrection were most acute- by loosening state control of collective bargaining. This allowed the trade unions to regain popularity by securing wage increases, and eventually led to their reunification under a conservative Peronist controlled CGT. On the other hand, Lanusse's appeal for a 'gran acuerdo nacional' against 'la subversión' was ignored. Thus: "as a final effort to stem the unrest Lanusse did the unthinkable: he lifted the eighteen-year ban on Peronism. Although his intention was to undercut the passion for revolt and to restore nostalgia as the pivotal force in the nation's

politics, Lanusse in effect resurrected Juan Perón as the cardinal figure in the country's affairs."[61] This legalisation of Peronism heralded the shift of the Montonero's activities into mass politics and the real beginning of Peronism's radicalisation and eventual split- which was to come into the open with the return of Peron and the massacre at Ezeiza airport on June 20, 1973, and his subsequent disavowal of the Montonero controlled wing of the movement once in power in 1974.

Although they were never to completely give up their arms, between 1972 and 1974 the Montoneros secured an important foothold in the nation's politics, though support amongst the organised working class was in fact to elude them -perhaps because some of their most frequent targets were right-wing trade union leaders. The social origins of its own leadership *were* predominantly upper middle class, and many of them had started their political careers as militant catholic nationalists. A cult of violence and martyrdom was to remain a constant from the organisation's beginnings, and their own radicalisation charted a parallel path to the history of the church in Latin America during the 1960's and 1970's. There was another important influence, the Cuban Revolution, particularly as it was incorporated into Peronist ideology by John William Cooke. Cooke had been active in the Peronist movement in the 1950's, and after the 1955 coup was appointed one of the leaders of 'la Resistencia'. Between 1960 and 1963 he lived in exile in

Cuba, an experience which was to greatly affect his political views: "Cooke now began to maintain, with the industrialists' desertion of Peronism and the experience of the Cuban Revolution in mind, that anti-imperialist undertakings could not be pursued without simultaneously waging war on capitalism in the underdeveloped world. Appealing to Peron to side unequivocally with the infant Peronist Left, he wrote: 'Nowadays nobody thinks that national liberation can be achieved without social revolution and therefore the struggle is also (one) by the poor against the rich...Since national liberation is indivisible from social revolution, there is no bourgeois nationalism.'" For Cooke, Peronism and Castroism were specifically national instances of a continent wide struggle for liberation, and thus Perón a revolutionary "who should disavow the reformist bureaucracy which had 'usurped' the local leadership of the Movement."[62] As Richard Gillespie goes on to say, "Cooke's unification of the objectives of national liberation and social revolution became a hallmark of the most revolutionary strains of Peronist Left thought" -including the Montoneros.[63] Perón himself, however, was not to take much notice of Cooke's position, although in the late 1960's he did begin to coin the suitably ambiguous phrase of 'socialismo nacional' -which, at the time, could mean all things to all Peronists! He also, opportunistically, never distanced himself from the activities of the Montoneros -quite the contrary- until he came to power in 1974, shortly before his death.[64]

After Lanusse opened up the political sphere, the Montoneros grew considerably in the run up to the presidential elections of 1973. Indeed, by managing to gain control of a Juventud Peronista (JP) increasingly swelled by middle class students joining their ranks, they became the campaign's chief protagonists. From 1972 to 1973 the Montoneros organised JP rallies in which the number of participants soared from approximately 5,000 to nearly 100,000, leading to the almost complete identification of both organisations. Although Perón was not allowed to participate, his stand in, Héctor Cámpora, won the election and was sworn in on 25 May, 1973 (to later stand down for Perón). A few days later, on 8 June, Roa Bastos published 'América Latina en MARCHA', twelve days before the return of Perón and the massacre at Ezeiza airport, when the battle for power between the left and right of the Peronist movement really began,[65] and when Perón's own position on the right of the movement was confirmed.

These, then, were the basic events left unsaid in, and presupposed by, Roa Bastos's article 'América Latina en MARCHA'. Written between the inauguration of a new radical Peronist government and its turn to the right, it displays the political optimism prevelent at the time. In this context dominated by the demand for the 'return of Perón', however, El Supremo's warning as to the threat of the reproduction of an absolutist moment -the 'cizaña'- within a process of political transformation (more specifically, the

overthrow of 'fuerzas de ocupación' -the neo-colonial military dictatorship) also becomes relevant, hinting at the central political position occupied by Perón, both as perceived by many of the political actors involved and as eventually adopted by him -as signalled by the events at Ezeiza- within that very process.[66] In this regard, it could be argued that not only was the story of the Paraguayan dictator José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia relevant to Roa Bastos' novel, but also his knowledge of Perón's centrality in Argentine political mythology (the 'cizaña'), not to mention his paradoxical experience of Perón's role in subverting the possibility of political rupture in Paraguay years before in the 1940's. Indeed, both figures shared a nationalist rhetoric and, as we have seen above, Perón was also the kind of figure Roa Bastos was seduced by, especially in moments of political crisis.

Returning to the passage with which I began this Part: it is now possible to appreciate the dramatic political scenario from which 'YO' (El Supremo) is being scrutinised by ÉL (the Compiler) in 1973 -207 years after the birth of Dr. Francia- as Roa Bastos was finishing writing Yo el Supremo, and in which the novel was read in Buenos Aires after being published there in 1974. Indeed, Roa Bastos has stated that it took him five years to write Yo el Supremo. He started, significantly, in 1968 -not long before the 'Cordobazo' and finished in 1973/4,[67] precisely the period which saw the collapse of the military dictatorship and

maximum political mobilisation throughout the country. New revolutionary political horizons had been drawn in this process, heralding 'national liberation' and a social(ist) transformation which, Roa Bastos stated at the time, nothing could halt. His obvious sympathy towards these political developments in Argentina is evident in his article for Marcha: in his view, they augured change throughout Latin America, including Paraguay.

b. The Cultural Dynamic: the Emergence of a New Audience.

I suggested above that the populist rupture in agrarian bourgeois rule in Argentina created the cultural space for the development of an audience for a novel such as Yo el Supemo. As is well known, much of the middle class, intelligentsia, and the traditional Socialist and Communist left, were strongly anti-Peronist during the first period of populist government in the 1940's and 1950's. For many its combination of nationalism and corporativism constituted a native form of fascism. If, for the Communist Party, this was underlined by Perón's wavering over supporting the Allied powers against Nazism, for the intelligentsia Peronism's apparent nationalist cultural agenda seemed to set strict limits on the perceived universality of artistic and scientific endeavour. It was this picture that was to change within the intellectual community in Buenos Aires -to which Roa Bastos belonged since his arrival from Paraguay- between the latter half of the 1950's and the first half of the 1970's as the Liberal State lurched, defended by the

military, from one crisis to another. Very basically, it involved a radical recuperation of what dominant liberal ideology had marginalised as 'barbarism'.

This change in political culture may be quickly illustrated by the successive shifts in meaning acquired by Eva Perón in Peronist mythology. As is well known, she first played a mediatory role between Perón and the 'descamisado' masses, whose interests she was supposed to tirelessly represent -she died doing so. After her death in 1952, she became canonised in images disseminated throughout society. For example, in one picture, Eva del mundo, she becomes a religious icon: published in a school textbook of the period, her face is represented at the centre of a cross of sunlight set in a skyblue background (in a clear allusion to the Argentine national flag) emerging from, and fixed phallic-like above, a drawing of the two hemispheres of the world -East and West. Later, as a fundamental ingredient of Montonero symbology, she becomes the more 'barbaric' 'Evita Montonera': "*¡Perón, Evita/la patria socialist! ¡Evita hay una sola, no rompan más las bolas!...¡Si Evita viviera/sería Montonera!*" chanted the Montoneros at their demonstrations. And then, briefly, with Perón's definitive confirmation of his own political position on the right of the movement, she becomes a symbol of Montonero disenchantment -indeed, she dies: "*Vea, vea, que manga de boludos,/votamos a una muerta, una puta/y un cornudo*".[68]

There are many reasons for this transformation in the intellectual sphere. The most obvious were the influences in Argentina -as elsewhere in Latin America and Europe- of the anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa, the very much connected radicalisation of critical theory -especially the suggestion, given the supposed complete integration and assimilation of the proletariat in the metropolis, that the marginalised in Third World countries were the new subjects of international social transformation- and, most importantly, the Cuban Revolution. These developments were translated, in the Argentine context, into such intellectual movements as 'filosofía de la liberación', in which during the early 1970's philosophers such as Enrique Dussel grounded the above historical experiences in philosophical terms that supposedly reconstructed the voice of western reason's radical 'other', expressing their situation and speaking for them ('analectics'); and, in Latin America as a whole, the extremely influential 'dependency theory', which attempted to read the process of imperialist expansion from the side of its victim-nations. One of the most important ideas produced by these and other discourses was a conception of the Argentine situation as neo-colonial -but one in which, it has been argued, the neo had hardly transformed the colonial at all. In this way, the political meaning of 'imperialism' was substantially the same as 'colonialism', and Argentina's status within the inter-state system similar to that of real colonies. Hence the predominance of another idea, to become central to anti-

imperialist struggles in general and the Left Peronists in particular: national (and subsequently Latin American) liberation. An idea, of course, evident in Roa Bastos's article 'América Latina en MARCHA', where he says that the late military dictatorship and the local oligarchy were, because they served the interests of 'foreign imperialism', correctly described as 'fuerzas de ocupación'.[67]

It should be stressed at this point that Left Peronism was not the only radical anti-dictatorial movement that emerged at the time. Indeed, there was a proliferation of such groupings splintering -as I have already noted with regard to the Peronist controlled trade unions- traditional political organisations and creating a variety of alternative radical and marxist ones. As is well known, the 1960's was also a period of rapid modernisation in Latin America. One of the effects of the intertwining of modernisation with post-Cuban Revolution radicalism was the so-called 'boom' in the area's literature and an extension in the reading public to support it. In the Argentine universities, not only did teachers and students read Perón and Cooke, but Fanon, Guevara, Mao, Althusser and Marcuse as well. Indeed, there is a very real sense in which the universities were the privileged location for much of the radicalisation of those years, producing a young left middle class eager to overthrow a military that had violated the autonomy of higher education since coming to power in 1966. It was from this inter-mixing of political traditions that

Yo el Supremo emerged, as did the text's immediate audience. Nevertheless, it was Peronism, no matter how radicalised, that was to become the dominant political movement at a time when 'Revolution' became the principle idea organising a political imaginary with 'Perón' at its centre, and it was to this movement that many intellectuals became committed- as is evident, for example, in the gradual shift towards supporting Perón by the important short-lived, but aptly named magazine Crisis.

Initially, after the overthrow of the first Peronist government in 1955, a group of young Sartrean anti-Peronist intellectuals associated with the magazine Contorno attempted to rethink the political and cultural significance of the movement: "no ya como el Otro absoluto, como el espacio del Mal y por tanto como la total ajenidad que debía ser abolida...No se trataba", Beatriz Sarlo goes on to point out "de un movimiento de exaltación, simétrico al de liquidación que realizaba Sur y el antiperonismo oligárquico, sino de hacer trabajar un sistema de interrogantes productivos...".[70] In other words, they attempted, on the one hand, to understand the historical significance of Peronism as an anti-oligarchic movement, and its support amongst the working class, without recourse to the anti-popular sentiments expressed in the influential magazine Sur or to the positivism of the traditional Stalinist left, whilst, on the other, attempting to steer clear of both the corporativist and demobilising populism

and nationalism of the Peronist movement. In the event, Sarlo regrets, this endeavour was not subsequently taken up: intellectual labour was rather subordinated to the logic of immediately given political programmes, that is to Peronism in its left-wing version.

One of the main reasons for this subordination was the hugely influential work amongst the young middle class of writers associated with the 'Izquierda Nacional' -for example, the historians Jorge Abelardo Ramos and Rodolfo Puiggrós and, particularly, the essayist Juan José Hernández Arregui who coined the term. Of particular importance was the latter's La formación de la conciencia nacional (1930-1960), dedicated to "la juventud argentina, que hoy, desorientada, busca un lugar en la lucha por la liberación."[71] The purpose of Arregui's book was to give Argentine youth that direction, embodied in the critical and political position advocated by the 'Izquierda Nacional' which, he maintains, constitutes "la superación teórica tanto del internacionalismo de las izquierdas colonizadas mentalmente, como el conservadurismo no menos colonial adverso a las masas."[72] Not only is the 'Izquierda Nacional' a theoretical synthesis in Arregui's view but a political and cultural one too. Although he ranges over a substantial amount of historical material, his argument is quite simple to reconstruct: he begins by locating the 'national' historically in the rural masses of the country; it was oligarchic nationalism that thought the 'national'

for the first time, incorporating it into its anti-cosmopolitan critique of 'international' liberalism; this version, emblematically represented in the work of Leopoldo Lugones, was, however, anti-popular; it was Peronism that represented the coming together of the 'national' (culture) and 'popular' politics in an alliance of the military (the institution which originally forged the nation-state) and the recently proletarianised rural masses; Perón's overthrow and the return of the liberal oligarchy signalled the need for "la lucha patriótica por la liberación nacional."[73] Since Liberal and traditional left politics -the first articulated to British Imperialism, and the second to either the continuation of liberal thought, the immigrant population or the diktats of the Soviet Union- ignored the national question all together, the Argentine youth should join the political project articulated by the 'Izquierda Nacional' and the tradition it had reconstructed. In effect, it could be argued that the National Left (remember Perón's coining of the ambiguous phrase 'socialismo nacional') had some success in this regard: "Its authors, though heterogeneous as a group, contributed greatly to the changing face of Peronism in the late 1960s and early 1970s by together making the idea of a Peronist Left *thinkable*, and thus helping to reorientate the Left, if not left parties, towards the national-popular movement." says Gillespie.[74] Arguably, however, following Sarlo, this very success on the part of the 'Izquierda Nacional' was also symptomatic of the weakness of a Left unable to build on the

critical relationship to Peronism hinted at by those intellectuals associated with Contorno in the late 1950's.

Finally, before returning to Yo el Supremo, it is worth noting how Roa Bastos himself may have experienced these developments in Argentine political culture. As we have seen, his article 'América Latina en MARCHA' suggests that he was very much involved, at least at the level of political sympathy. Nevertheless, insofar as Roa Bastos criticism is concerned, the extent of his involvement in Argentine cultural life has been largely forgotten. In fact, his contribution was substantial. Particularly significant was his role as a screenplay writer during a period of rennovation in the country's cinema. For parallel to the 'boom' in literature during the 1960's, there was a similar process of modernisation and radicalisation in Argentine film-making too. More or less established directors such as Leopoldo Torre Nilsson and Fernando Ayala struck out in new directions, consolidating, in the case of the former, an international reputation and, in the case of the second, fomenting new writing skills amongst younger writers (for example David Viñas, who wrote the screenplay for his film El jefe -an allegory of authoritarian Peronism). In this way a space was created for a younger generation of film makers (and writers) known as the 'nueva onda' which included directors such as Manuel Antín and Lautaro Murúa. Roa Bastos contributed screenplays to both these directors: a version of Ricardo Güiraldes' Don Segundo

Sombra for Antín (which came out in 1969), and two films for Murua: Shunko and the excellent Alias Gardelito (both 1960).[75] Fernando Birri meanwhile had set up a radical experimental film school at the Universidad del Litoral in Santa Fé where, for a period, Roa Bastos also taught film and sreenplay writing.[76] Like other areas of Argentine culture at the time, the film industry experienced the development of politically and formally avant-garde kinds of film-making. Apart from those already mentioned, there emerged Raymundo Glayzer's anti-peronist militant cinema group 'Cine de la Base' and, perhaps the most famous and influential, the Left-Peronist 'Cine Liberación'. The latter's most important film was Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's La hora de los hornos -made and originally shown in clandestinity in the mid-1960's. A four-part documentary on the history of Argentine underdevelopment it too, however, subordinated some of the most advanced and daring forms of film technique -which came to be known as 'Third Cinema'- to a naive trust in Perón as a symbol of national liberation.[77] As such, it was very much at one with its political times.

Given the strength of the political dynamic I have described, it is perhaps not very surprising that it had effects in the very place in which Roa Bastos worked and earned his living as a professional screenplay writer. But it is significant, for it suggests that the sympathy expressed for such developments in his article 'América

Latina en MARCHA' hinged on his own very concrete experiences during that period of Argentine history and, therefore, should not be merely understood as an act of abstract commitment on his part. In sum, Roa Bastos' experience of the radicalisation of the middle class intellectual sphere during the 1960's and early 1970's functioned at various levels: political, cultural, and even economic. Having lived and worked in Argentina since 1947, it is quite understandable that he had a very real stake in political developments there and, furthermore, that his writing was marked by the intensity of this particular conjuncture.

Through a reading of Roa Bastos' article 'América Latina en MARCHA', I have attempted in this section, firstly, to reconstruct aspects of his political and intellectual horizons of expectation in 1973 as he was finishing writing Yo el Supremo -207 years after the birth of Dr. Francia. In other words, the historical moment of the work's production to which 'YO' (El Supremo) speaks in the passage I quoted above. Secondly, by outlining the accompanying transformations within the intellectual sphere -involving the radicalisation and turn towards Peronism of significant sectors of the young middle class- I have also mapped out a context and a potential audience for the novel's reception. The line traced by 'YO' in addressing 'ÉL' (his projection into the future from the past), and El Supremo's republican critique of absolutism from the point of view of popular

right (which according to 'América Latina en MARCHA' seems to be in the process of realisation in 1973), thus may be read as marking the effect -historical anachronism- of the constitution of a new readership on Yo el Supremo's composition.[78] In this sense 'ÉL' may be read as not only referring to the producer of the work -Roa Bastos in Buenos Aires in the early 1970's- but also to the formation of a new, radicalised, middle class reading public. The question to be posed now is whether, because of such developments, Paraguayan history, particularly its post-independence period, became relevant to such a reading public.

c. The Federalist 'Connotative Domain'.

Above it was asserted that Yo el Supremo dramatised the conflict of two of the most culturally and politically embedded master narratives in the region. On the one hand, that of authoritarian liberalism, represented in the text by Mitre, and on the other, that of nationalism, represented by El Supremo. More specifically, we saw how El Supremo was engaged in an interpretative struggle with liberal historiography. Mitre, apart from being a novelist, translator and statesman -he became president of Argentina and led the Triple Alliance in the devastating war against Paraguay that completely transformed its economic and political structures- was also one of the foremost historians of the Liberal State.[79] Two important aspects of this historiography need to be foregrounded. The first is especially evident in Mitre's Historia de Belgrano y de la

Independencia Argentina: a reduction of history to the biographical form. The second is a feature of much of the writing of the time and intimately bound up with the first: a demonisation of the political cultures of the interior against which Mitre and the liberal agrarian bourgeoisie fought to build the nation-state and impose its hegemony. In this way, liberal historiography produced a history of the nation that was essentially the history (or biography) of the conflict between heroic or 'barbaric' individuals: 'biografías de la civilización' or 'biografías de la barbarie', Belgrano or Facundo. Or, of course, Rosas. Thus, according to Juan Bautista Alberdi, Mitre appropriated the figure of Belgrano for his own liberal political cause and thereby became... Belgrano's 'hijo adoptivo'! From then on, he says, "quien dice Belgrano, dice Mitre, por más que Mitre no signifique Belgrano."[80] With the crisis of the Liberal State in the 1930's a new nationalist historiography emerged, known as 'revisionismo histórico'. According to its narratives, the story of liberalism in Argentina was in fact the story of British imperialist expansion in the area. A corollary of this version was their attempt to recuperate Rosas from liberal marginalisation because, they maintained, he in fact defended the nation from the interests of the British Empire and the destruction of local markets. In Halperín Donghi's view, however, apart from their introduction of the analysis of imperialism into Argentine historiography, the revisionists' critique mirrored the heroic structure of Liberal historiography, replacing

sanctised versions of Rosas for sanctised versions of Belgrano and San Martín (Mitre). They too, he concludes, subordinated historical study of the past to immediate political projects of the day and thus produced very little new historical knowledge at all: history, rather, became an exercise in ideology.[81]

As in almost all areas of Latin American cultural and political life, the Cuban Revolution had effects on revisionist historiography too, marking a radical turn to the left and a shift in the historical gaze. From concentrating, for example, on defending the Buenos Aires province landowner Rosas, historians became more preoccupied with popular and caudillo resistance to state formation and capitalist penetration of the country's interior: the privileged space of 'barbarism' in dominant liberal culture, the 'national' for the revisionist alternative, and now the national-'popular' for radical historical revisonism.[82]

This anti-Liberal historiography was especially important in a country in which there was no strong peasant tradition. It was the <u>past</u>, rather than contemporary social relations, that became the cultural terrain for ideological struggle, providing a 'connotative domain' that could be articulated to the present and furnish counter-hegemonic movements with a national political symbology -it too read history for the present. In political terms, this meant resorting to the Federalist historical repertoire of signs

and mobilising it against liberal Unitarianism. Indeed this is the significance of the name adopted by the 'Montoneros', referring the guerrilla group back to the Federal plebeian horsemen of the interior who defended the interests of the caudillos in the provinces from the encroaching Pampean bourgeoisie and the Liberal State.[83] The importance of these successive shifts in the historical gaze was, therefore, that it provided the anti-Liberal present with an anti-Liberal past, a tradition -a cultural fund- that could galvanize the forces mobilised against the ruling class. In this sense, the perceived possible attainment of social emancipation in the political present also semed to hold out the promise of redemption for the popular struggles of the past.

In this context, not only were the political developments in Argentina significant for Paraguay (at least in Roa Bastos' view, as expressed in 'América Latina en MARCHA'), but the post-independence history of Paraguay became significant for the reading formation constituted throughout the 1960's in Argentina too. We have already noted Roa Bastos's experience of and reaction to a previous crisis in the Liberal State in the region during a period of 'populist rupture'. Indeed, I have suggested that it was at this moment that the state -as embodied in a heroic 'national' figure- emerged as a particular object of his concern, reflected in his writing at the time. How is Yo el Supremo inscribed into this new conjuncture in which the

Liberal State in Argentina is once more plunged into crisis?

That Yo el Supremo is a critique of the Liberal State in Argentina has been alluded to above. That it stages this critique as a radical revisionist gesture now becomes evident. In polemicising with Mitre, his history writing and his activity as a politician, El Supremo addresses one of the principal constructors of the Argentine state, and in doing so also adds his voice to the array of anti-liberal forces there in the 1970's. It is from here that 'ÉL' (the author as compiler and reader of the past) turns his gaze back towards the Paraguayan past and makes it ('YO') speak. The specificity of the relationship between both nations is what makes this gesture so important, for without the War of the Triple Alliance (1865-1870) and its consequences the relationship between past and present in this context would not be so relevant: that is, the fact that this war was a crucial moment in the formation of the Argentine state -now in crisis- and the main historical event determining the transformation of Paraguay's own. Written in Buenos Aires, Yo el Supremo thus seems to assume the historicity of its author's exile in the metropolis, his political and literary experiences, in a politically productive fashion. Thus, one of the most important threads in the novel's political logic of production, posed by the work itself, is the trans-national historic line drawn between 'YO' and 'ÉL'.

At a moment in which, in Roa Bastos' words, the 'segunda

emancipación latinoamericana' is on the political horizon, the novel dramatises the first, and does so in El Supremo's words. It is for this reason that Yo el Supremo is also a pre-history. Not in the sense that it represents a process which is a-historical. It rather represents another history, previous to that of authoritarian Liberalism in the region -represented by Mitre- but in which its possibility as an emergent force is already present. From this point of view, the War of the Triple Alliance marks a point of continuity and discontinuity. It allows El Supremo to speak critically -or dictate- to the time of the novel's production (continuity), through Liberalism -in crisis- as exemplary of something different (discontinuity).

Unlike most of the other provinces of the ex-Viceroyalty of the River Plate, Paraguay, as we have seen, became an independent nation-state -indeed, before Argentina itself. In his 'circular perpetua', El Supremo represents this process to his readers as revolutionary:

> "Lo bueno, lo cierto a pesar de todo, es que aquí la Revolución no se ha perdido. El país ha salido ganando. La gente-muchedumbre ha subido a ocupar su sitio en derecho de sí. Los utensilios animados de antes son los campesinos libres de hoy. Poseen sus predios y medios; remedios para todos sus males que se han vuelto bienes. Ya no tienen que ajornalarse sino al Estado, su único patrón, que vela por ellos con leyes justas, iguales para todos. La tierra es de quien la trabaja, y cada uno recibe lo que necesita. No más, pero tampoco no menos."(315)

It is the idea of an independent nation-state founded on popular right -jacobin republicanism- that moves El Supremo to dictate; it is also his own contradictory location within

the process of securing it -as stated in his conversation with Bonpland- that the novel plays out (a point I will be making in greater detail in Part 3 below). And it is this project that he counter-poses to the project emerging from Buenos Aires -as represented by its emissaries to Paraguay, and as written in Mitre's Historia....

In Mitre's view, Dr. Francia was, on the contrary, "el más bárbaro de los tiranos", and his regime counter-revolutionary.[84] This is for a very precise reason. Not long after his failed expedition to Paraguay, Belgrano returns as a member of a diplomatic mission to negotiate with the government their relationship with the Junta in Buenos Aires. Francia was not as yet dictator, but part of a triumvirate ruling the country. He did, however, control the negotiations and, Mitre says, manage to entrap the mission delegates in a "círculo mágico" -to the extent that they could not understand "cuál era la potestad misteriosa que así limitaba su esfera de acción"[85]. El Supremo playfully explains this 'mystery': "Los tiestos-escuchas colocados subrepticiamente en los lugares de reunión registran alarmantes chácharas. Decido pues acompañar a los huéspedes personalmente a todas partes, a toda hora. Sobre todo a Belgrano. Me convierto en su sombra, y no diré que lo sigo hasta la puerta del común (todo lugar se ha vuelto sospechoso), ni que me convierto en ángel guardián de su sueño, porque también debo preparar la minuta del tratado. Palabra por palabra."(222)

It is one word in this treaty, signed by both parties, which becomes the crux of the matter for Mitre: "El Tácito del Plata reprochará después severamente, en su crónica, a los comisionados el haber cedido a las exigencias del Paraguay pactando una liga federal sin obtener a cambio la más mínima ventaja. Cada uno habla segun la locura que lo alucina. Al demonio el Tácito platino!"(241), says El Supremo. The reason is, writes Mitre, that it guaranteed Paraguay's "independencia económica... independencia territorial" and "independencia política", thus fragmenting what were the 'Provincias Unidas'. Even more important, however, at least in the long term, was that Article 5 of the Treaty suggested possible relations between the two independent nations within the terms of a federation: "Ésta fue la primera vez", Mitre continues, "que resonó en la historia argentina la palabra *federación*, tan famosa despues en sus guerras civiles...".[86] El Supremo adds, in a conversation with the other delegate from Buenos Aires, Echeverría, and quoting directly from Mitre's own text:

> "*Esa palabra consignada en un tratado,* dice vuestro Tácito, *tomando una forma visible no debía tardar en poner en conmoción a todos los pueblos del Río de la Plata dando un punto de apoyo a la anarquía y una bandera a la disolución política y social que* comprometerá *el éxito de la revolución* y aniquilará *las fuerzas sociales aun cuando después se* convierta *en la forma constitucional sintetizando los elementos de vida orgánica* de nuestros pueblos. Vuestro Tácito con defectuosa sintaxis lo reconoce y lo niega al mismo tiempo, amparado en la tutela colonial inglesa."(229)[87]

What Mitre recognises and then denies is, of course, the *political content of 'barbarie'*, federalism, against which he would fight for most of his political life, culminating

in the War of the Triple Alliance against Paraguay. But perhaps most interesting here, fantastic even, is that in Mitre's Historia... the political origins of 'barbarism' (federalism) are to be found in Dr. Francia! -and it is for this reason that he is called "el más bárbaro de los tiranos".[88]

To write Yo el Supremo Roa Bastos has thus cannibalised one of the main texts of Argentine liberalism and put its discourse into the mouth of the very 'other' it fabricates. One of the effects of this critical intervention is that the legitimate political concerns of federalist 'barbarie'- disavowed by Mitre- are recovered as very real political possibilities of the time, at least until 1870 when, as we have seen, Paraguay's 'Sur' does become its 'Norte'.[89] In this fashion, the 'circular perpetua' begins to break down the organising structure of Mitré's work. This subversive strategy is eventually taken even further by El Supremo: he, the epitome of 'barbarism', appropriates -to paraphrase Alberdi- Mitre's 'padre adoptivo' himself, Belgrano -thus breaking the liberal oligarchy's family ties to the past as elaborated by Mitre. El Supremo thus goes to the very centre of Mitre's work and 'kidnaps' it whilst simultaneously revising its ideological tenor. After reading Yo el Supremo one is left in no doubt that on saying Mitre one is not also automatically saying Belgrano.[90]

As in the populist rupture of the 1940's, when the state

as embodied in a national hero emerges as an object of Roa Bastos's literary concern, in the early 1970's Roa Bastos also resorts to such an exemplary historical individual. As Dr. Francia and the story of the origins of the Paraguayan nation-state are elaborated in Yo el Supremo, however, the politics are very different, enabling him to reproduce the radical historical revisionist gesture of using an anti-liberal past against a liberalism in crisis -specifically, against Mitre, so important a figure in the history of both Argentina and Paraguay. In a context in which the political culture of federalism takes on -as a 'connotative domain'- counter-hegemonic importance, El Supremo radically subverts one of Argentina's dominant liberal texts and recovers the political validity of a project disavowed by both Mitre and Sarmiento. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that this radicalism also reproduces the heroic structure of both liberal and revisionist historiography. El Supremo's narration of independence is also an auto-biography. Moreover, the ambiguity of the dictator's political position, whilst enabling him to speak in solidarity with events unfolding in Argentina between 1969 and 1974, also circumscribes his relevance. After all, he is -like Perón?- an example of the absolutist 'cizaña' he metaphorically criticises. Indeed, the 'circular perpetua' is a defensive polemical narrative told from perceived political failure- symbolised, for example, by the 'diluvio' that breaks him in two, and the blind birds that fall crashing at his feet(62, 450-451). Again, even this, the creation of 'YO' and 'EL',

is both enabling and inhibiting, since apart from signifying failure it also, in one of its guises, serves as a device which allows him ('YO') to speak to the present ('ÉL'). It is, however, to El Supremo's political irrelevance that I turn to now by way of concluding this chapter (but see Part Three). It illustrates how, although a critique, El Supremo's discourse functions as pre-history. This brings us to one of the novel's most important characters, María de los Angeles, and to the further intertwining of Argentine and Paraguayan history.

During Belgrano's mission to Paraguay he is asked to be "padrino general"(234) at a mass baptism ceremony. The first in line is José Tomás Isasi -"mi amigo, mi compadre, mi compañero de años"(334) says El Supremo- bearing his baby daughter María de los Angeles. Subsequently, Isasi goes on an economic mission to Buenos Aires with "cincuenta mil pesos en moneda de oro". He takes María de los Angeles with him: "Lo último que ví de mi ahijada fue su rubio pelo brillar en un lampo al sol de aquella esplendorosa mañana de abril. Con una extraña aprehensión me sumergí en los febriles preparativos de la partida."(335) remembers El Supremo. Isasi betrays him and never returns. "Desandando años, desengaños, traiciones, malavisiones"(347) the dictator, however, plays back historical time and makes Isasi return from Buenos Aires "a contracorriente" to be interrogated and punished for taking the nation's gold: "Amarrado a un poste de fierro cumple la condena que he

dictado contra él en el instante mismo en que su nefanda acción fue descubierta."(347) El Supremo's control over historical time is, however, disrupted by another presence: "Antes aún de verla, sé que es ella. María de los Angeles está ahí."(348)

She has returned (like the author's gaze), he says, from a wandering existence, marked by her life in exile in Argentina -and resonant with the developments in the nation's political history between 1969 and 1973. She lived with an old indian woman in Córdoba and Tucumán and "Entre los guiñapos de la túnica", he says, "veo en tu hombro izquierdo una mancha. Sé lo que es eso. Rastro de la vida montonera. El peso de la chuza, del fusil."(348 -my emphasis). Returned from the future and Buenos Aires, María de los Angeles foregrounds the distance between them both, the fact that, despite everything, El Supremo belongs to the political past: "Desde una lejanía inalcanzable me mira fijamente. Enciende el viejo espacio muerto."(348) She awakens his hope that his dreams may be realised, but it soon emerges that his political model is defunct. El Supremo is plunged into subjective crisis, he thinks about death and the incommunication between genders, and his discourse becomes increasingly lyrical and expressive of his loneliness: "Anduvimos lado a lado sin poder juntarnos, en edades diferentes...Solo. Sin familia. Solo. Sin amor. Sin consuelo. Solo. Sin nadie. Solo en país extraño, el más extraño siendo el más mío. Solo. Mi país acorralado,

solo, extraño. Desierto. Solo. Lleno de mi desierta persona."(348-9) He then gives her a birthday present, a broken toy: "Representa a los días de la semana girando sobre una rueda. Cambia de color y de sonido según los días...Creo que el resorte se atascó..."(350) At first, she refuses this symbol of time-stood-still. The dictator then gives María de los Angeles the symbol of his power, a rifle: "¿Qué puedo darte? Tal vez aquel fusil...Entre esos fusiles fabricados de materia meteórica, está el fusil que empuñé al nacer. ¡Ése, ése! Tómalo. ¿Lo lleva? ¡Lo lleva!"(350) Only then, once empowered, does she pick up the musical clock and set it, and time, going again.

The intertwining of Paraguayan and Argentine history is evident here once more. It is <u>as if</u> (after all the work is fictional) the novel re-writes Roa Bastos' thoughts on the continent-wide effects -which expressly include Paraguay- of the political developments in Argentina in 1973 as set out in his article published in the magazine <u>Marcha</u>. María de los Angeles becomes director of the "Casa de Muchachas Huérfanas y Recogidas"(351). Her political critique of El Supremo is made clear when, in an answer to the dictator's question asking how pupils regard "la imagen sacrosanta de nuestro Supremo Gobierno"(432), a pupil from the <u>Casa</u> answers: "El Supremo Gobierno debe convocar inmediatamente a elecciones populares y soberanas. Entretanto, debe disolver el ejército parasitario mandado por jefes corrompidos y venales, transformándolo en milicias que hagan avanzar la

Revolución junto con todo el pueblo de la Patria."(434) -El Supremo agrees! María de los Angeles apparently then, for these are new political times, begins to organise a popular army or guerrilla 'foco'."[91] Patiño reports: "De noche la Casa de Recogidas y Huérfanas, un prostíbulo. De día, un cuartel. Han formado un batallón de todos colores, edades y condición...Antes de romper el alba se van a los montes." (435) El Supremo's political times seem to be over.

There is, however, some ambiguity here too. For there apparently still seems to be a continuity between El Supremo and María de los Angeles. The break is not that radical, or at least is only momentary. For although she disrupts his dead historical time -"para ella el tiempo transcurre de otra manera"(350)- and refuses to address El Supremo -she does not speak his language of power, she acts[92]- she does take his rifle. The point here, I think, is that there is no clear cut univocal resolution. While María de los Angeles is represented as a new subject of a new history- she sets (another) time going again- the radicality of such a gesture is contained by religious 'family ties': she is El Supremo's goddaughter.[93] On the other hand, despite his historical importance within an ongoing anti-liberal tradition in the region, the difference is surely operative at the political level, for El Supremo is irrelevant to the present -pre-history- as a political model -he represents the 'cizaña'. Without wishing to reduce this dilemma to the political conjuncture of the novel's production, it is

arguable that its structure -the complex relation to a mythical hero embodying the state- and the problem it poses -how to overcome a political imaginary organised in such a way- is very similar to the relationship of Left Peronist and non-Peronist forces to Perón in the years between 1969 and 1974. El Supremo is thus <u>both</u> relevant and irrelevant to the present: he is part of a political tradition one may know but, like María de los Angeles, disrespect.

Indeed, throughout <u>Yo el Supremo</u>, women function as signs of the radical subversion of the dictator's Supreme (male) power -they threaten his dictatorial identity. His "media hermana" Petrona Regalada, for example, mirrors him (so does 'el negro Pilar', as we shall see in Part Three) and refuses to answer his demands as she confronts his power with femininity: "Me veo en ella. Espejo-Persona... me devuelve mi apariencia vestida de mujer."(13) Most dramatic, however, is the later appearance of another 'rifle-woman' -with a "cuerpo-tercerola"(54)- La Andaluza, who invades El Supremo's space through one of the phallic instuments of his power: "entró en el estudio por la lente del catalejo"(54). As we shall see in Part Three, <u>sight</u> and the ability to read and interpret constitute on of the mainstays of the dictator's ability to rule. Once inside- and El Supremo has hidden behind a curtain so as to best spy on her from a safe distance- she sets another symbol of his power in motion, the 'meteoro' that the dictator has chained to his desk, with the threatning <u>smell</u> of sexual desire. El

Supremo's anxious discourse unfolds in neurotic -and mysogynistic- repetition:

> "El inconfundible, el inmemorial husmo a hembra. Tufo carnal a sexo. Lujurioso, sensual, lúbrico, libidinoso, salaz, voluptuoso, deshonesto, impúdico, lascivo, fornicatorio...Enrosca sus millares de brazos a los horcones de mi inexpugnable eremitorio-erectorio. Pretende desmoronarlo... Pretende desmoronarme.(58)

La Andaluza has come, he narrates, to murder him. She is, in his threatened eyes, the sign (smell) of death, and the end of his power.[94]

In this chapter I have attempted to recover the context of Yo el Supremo's actual production in Buenos Aires, the metropolis' significance in Roa Bastos' own biography, and its historical importance for the history of Paraguay itself. It is not that the novel is an Argentine novel. What is more important, even if one agrees with those whom suggest that it is obviously Paraguayan, is that the reality of the Argentine dimension in Roa Bastos' life and work is not denied. The same goes for the history of Paraguay, especially since the War of the Triple Alliance. In this regard, we have seen how Yo el Supremo addresses this history in a very complex fashion, and how one thread of its political logic of production is inscribed in the political and cultural transformations in Argentina between the first and second 'populist ruptures'. Perhaps most importantly, apart from the historical material I have reproduced, we have seen how the state emerges as an object of the author's literary concern. Many of the themes touched on in this

chapter -for example, republicanism and compilation- will be looked at in more detail below. In my next Part however, I will -myself- return to Paraguay.

NOTES

1. Rubén Bareiro Saguier, "La Historia y las historias en 'Yo el Supremo' de Augusto Roa Bastos", in Seminario sobre "Yo el Supremo" de Augusto Roa Bastos, Centre de Recherches Latino-Américaines de l'Université de Poitiers, Poitiers, 1976, pp. 27-40. See also John Kraniauskas, "Prolegómenos a una lectura contextual de 'Yo el Supremo'", in Fernando Burgos (ed.) Las voces del Karaí: estudios sobre Augusto Roa Bastos, Edelsa-Edi-6, Madrid, 1988,pp.109-11.

2. Augusto Roa Bastos, "Algunos núcleos generadores de un texto narrativo", Escritura, Núm. 4, Julio-Agosto, 1977, p. 184.

3. Augusto Roa Bastos, Yo el Supremo, Siglo XXI Editores, Buenos Aires, 1974, p. 451. All subsequent references will be to this edition, and placed in the text in parenthesis.

4. Augusto Roa Bastos, Yo el Supremo (Edición de Milagros Ezquerro), Ediciones Cátedra, Madrid, 1983, p. 591 (note 693).

5. Dictating the 'Circular Perpetua' to his secretary Patino, for example, he says: "Y levantaron un nuevo Paraíso de Mahoma en el maizal neolítico. Tacha esa palabra que todavía no se usa." (39). Thus, in the very moment of affirming his own historical context, the dictator also affirms that of the author, as Compiler, and that of the reader.

6. In Paraguay Roa Bastos was already quite a well known up-and-coming writer. Two of his unpublished plays had been performed in Asunción, El niño del rocío (1944) and Mientras llega el día (1946) written with Fernando Oca de Valle, and in 1942 his first collection of poetry, El ruiseñor de la aurora, was published. In 1937 he won the 'Ateneo Paraguayo' literary prize for a novel, Fulgencio Miranda which, however, remains unpublished.

7. "Mi delito era irrescatable: ser secretario de redacción del único diario independiente de Asunción, El País". See Dasso Saldívar. "Entrevista: Augusto Roa Bastos. La ira tranquila", El País, 20 October, 1985, p. 6-13; R. Bareiro Saguier, Augusto Roa Bastos, Ediciones Trilce/ Editions Caribéennes, Montivideo, 1989, pp. 7-65, where Roa Bastos also suggests that he was persecuted because of a series of criticisms he had made of J. Natalicio González's work. The repression following the defeat of the insurrectionary forces are touched on in the novel by Paraguay's other major novelist, Gabriel Casaccia: Los Herederos, Planeta, Barcelona, 1976.

8. Roa Bastos says: "Me parecía una contradicción inversosímil que no funcionaba en la lógica de los acontecimientos humanos y sociales. Pero así fue.", quoted in R. Bareiro Saguier, Op. cit., p. 66.

9. Ernesto Laclau, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, Verso, London, 1979, pp. 143-198. These pages mainly deal with the case of populism in Argentina.

10. Dario Salinas' observation about the political dynamic of the Liberal government could be attributed to subsequent governments too: "La clase dominante, o las fracciones que la conforman, encuentra en el campesinado su propio trampolín en sentido político. El proceso paraguayo de expansión capitalista empieza de ese modo a perfilar los aspectos de su propia modalidad: exprimir sus propios desechos. Es decir, las tareas no resueltas en torno a la cuestión agraria, contienen las bases ideológicos-políticos de sus propias características resolutivo-expansivas.", 'Movimiento obrero y procesos políticos en Paraguay', in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), Historia del movimiento obrero en América Latina, Vol. 3, Siglo XXI, UNAM, Mexico, 1984, p. 372. See also: Jorge Lara Castro, 'Paraguay: luchas sociales y nacimiento del movimiento campesino', in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), Historia política de los campesinos latinoamericanos, Siglo XXI, Mexico, 1984; J. F. Segovia Corvalán, Origen y desarrollo de las clases sociales en Paraguay 1870-1904, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, UNAM, Mexico, 1979; Victor-Jacinto Flecha, Años 20: movimientos socio-políticos en el Paraguay y proyección posteriores, unpublished manuscript, n.d.. I have based my description of the following events on, amongst others, the above sources, although the idea that they constitute part of a failed 'populist rupture' is my own hypothesis.

11. These political developments were also reflected upon in some of the literature of the period. Especially in the work of the popular playwright and poet Julio Correa. See Juan Manuel Marcos, 'Julio Correa: postmodernismo y parodia', Plural, Núm. 143, Agosto, 1983, pp. 42-46.

12. Dasso Saldívar, Op. cit.; R. Bareiro Saguier, Op. cit.. As a child before the war, during army mobilisations, Roa Bastos also wrote plays with his mother to entertain the troops.

13. On opposing U.S. and British oil interests in the area see Omar Díaz de Arce, 'El Paraguay contemporáneo' in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), América Latina: historia de medio siglo, 1. América del Sur, Siglo XXI, UNAM, Mexico, 1977, pp. 338-347. The war was thus also symptomatic of the growing strength of U.S. hegemony in the Southern Cone and, of course, its correlate: the increasing demise of British influence in the area.

14. That liberals should have actively promoted a corporativist state rather than, as one would have expected, the nationalist anti-liberal Colorado Party, underlines the dominant caudillesque political culture at the time. As we shall see below, it was the Colorado Party that pushed through liberal policies after the War of the Triple Alliance. See Rafael Barrett, 'Tiros en el Paraguay', in El dolor paraquayo, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas, 1978 (originally published in 1909): "Se parecen tanto unos a otros los partidos, que la única manera de distinguirlos es ponerles un color ('azul' and 'colorado', J.K.)...con lo cual se ahorra juiciosamente la molestia de inventar un programa.", p. 164. Of course, account should also be taken of the impact of fascism amongst the dominant political sectors too. See Guido Rodríguez Alcalá, Ideología Autoritaria, RP Ediciones, Asunción, 1987.

15. See, for example, Tomás Eloy Martínez's extremely interesting novel in this respect La novela de Perón, Legasa, Buenos Aires, 1985.

16. J. F. Segovia Corvalán, Op. cit., part II, p. 51-52 (my emphasis). This observation about the nation's political dynamic confirms the statement of D. Salinas quoted above (see note 10).

17. David Rock, 'The Survival and Restoration of Peronism' in D. Rock (ed.) Argentina in the Twentieth Century, Duckworth, London, 1975, p. 179. For my description of this period of Argentine history, and Peronism in general, I have relied on the following: David Rock, Argentina 1516-1987, I.B. Tauris, London, 1987; Ronaldo Munck, Ricardo Falcón & Bernardo Galitelli, Argentina: from Anarchism to Peronism, Zed Press, London, 1987; Marcelo Cavarozzi, 'Peronismo, sindicato y política en la Argentina', in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), Op. cit., 1984; Juan José Sebrelli, Los deseos imaginarios del Peronismo, Editorial Legasa, Buenos Aires, 1984.

18. See Ernesto Laclau, Op. cit.. "En ningún momento del régimen peronista la clase obrera decidió ningún acontecimiento político importante, siempre fue convocada para convalidar hechos ya consumados o que por lo menos iban a ser manejados exclusivamente por Perón.", Juan José Sebrelli, Op. cit., p. 58.

19. For a history of Paraguayan migration, especially to Argentina, see Andrés Flores Colombino, La fuga de intelectuales. Emigración paraquaya, Montevideo, 1972.

20. D. Rock, in Op. cit., p. 187-188.

21. See John King, Sur. A Study of the Argentine Literary Journal and its Role in the Development of a Culture, 1931-1970, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 129-165.

22. R. Bareiro Saguier, Op. cit., p. 11-12. Fernando Oca del Valle, the co-author of Mientras llega el día, was a Spanish exile in Parguay. In an article published recently in the Asunción newspaper El Diario Noticias, November 4, 1989, the writer Guido Rodríguez Alcalá has suggested that Roa Bastos has mythologised his exile in Rubén Bareiro Saguier's book: "Se trata de ficción de primera categoría, porque casi llega a convencer de que, para capturar a un periodista políticamente anodino y literariamente desconocido, un Gobierno asalta la legación de un país amigo (verdadero acto de guerra) y encima más grande (como el Brasil). Casi convence de que Morínigo odiaba de muerte a Roa, a quien le dio trabajo en su Departamento Nacional de Propaganda y le nombró secretario de la Embajada del Paraguay en Buenos Aires, por Decreto 16.016 del 20 de octubre de 1946, sólo en semanas anterior al empastelamiento de El País, que no produjo incendio ni fue para agarrar a San Roa." For the episodes referred to here, see R. Bareiro Saguier, Op. cit., pp. 51-65. Rodríguez Alcalá says that in fact: "...en 1947, y no por razones políticas, Roa salió del país para establecerse en la Argentina, donde estuvo hasta 1976, año en que consiguió trabajo en Francia, donde vive hasta hoy. Durante el 'exilio', pudo entrar y salir del país libremente, pero en 1982, por razones incomprensibles, Stroessner lo echó y le prohibió entrar al Paraguay, que solía visitar como turista." Rodríguez Alcalá reproduces in his article, amongst other evidence, Decree 16.016. Whatever may be the case here, it is generally quite well known, however, that Roa Bastos did visit Paraguay several times during this whole period and in fact wrote about it, for example: 'Crónica paraguaya' in Sur, No. 293, 1965. In this sense, Roa Bastos' visits to Paraguay have been public knowledge for some time now. Account must also be taken of the dramatic developments in Paraguayan political life between 1946 and 1947 which I have briefly described above. Indeed, according to Decreto 16.016, reproduced by Rodríguez Alcalá, Roa Bastos was named Secretary to the Paraguayan embassy in Buenos Aires during the short-lived 'primavera democrática' of Morínigo's government, in the later half of 1946. The poems I shall partially reproduce below, however, reflect the ambiguity in Roa Bastos' relation to state power during this period.

23. Quoted in Alfredo M. Seiferheld, Estigarribia. Veinte años de política paraguaya, Ed. Laurel, Asunción, 1983, p. 453-454. This book suggests that the new Constitution written for Estigarribia was anti-oligarchic, but that it was a mistake insofar as it was written for one man, Estigarribia -a liberal- and thus blind to history, in this case Morínigo.

24. See, for example, Augusto Roa Bastos, El naranjal ardiente (Nocturno Paraguayo), 1947-1949, Alcándara Asunción, 1983. and the interview in Karl Kohut, Escribir en París, Hogar del Libro, Barcelona, 1983, pp. 235-263.

25. 'Eternamente Hermanos', partially quoted in Leandro Prieto Yegros, 'Carta abierta a Augusto Roa Bastos', Ultima Hora, 4 August, 1986. Yegros reproduced these verses, originally published, he claims, in the newspaper El País, 15 August, 1954, to embarass Roa Bastos after he had attacked Stroessner in an important essay, 'Las últimas boqueadas del tiranosaurio paraguayo' published the week before in Asunción in the Febrerista newspaper El Pueblo, 30 Julio, 1986. I reproduce them here to illustrate a certain continiuty in Roa Bastos' literary concerns: the nation and, more particularly, the state as embodied in 'heroic' historical figures.

26. Given that this aspect of the novel can only be fully appreciated once we have considered its political and cultural insertion into its regional and historical contexts, I shall return to this theme later in Chapters Seven and Eight below.

27. See Chapter 7 below, where I look at this question in more detail.

28. "Introducción" in Op. cit., p. 27. The others are: the 'apuntes' ("la transcripción de todo lo que se dice entre el Supremo y su amanuense"); the 'cuaderno privado' ("ahi escribe el Supremo cosas que no tienen más destinatario que él mismo"); the 'notas' at the foot of the page; and a group of miscellaneous others, e.g. the 'pasquin', the 'cuaderno de bitácora' etc.. See also Juan Manuel Marcos's "Estrategia textual de 'Yo el Supremo'" in his Roa Bastos, precusor del post-boom, Editorial Katun, Mexico, 1983, pp. 41-62.

29. See also Bartolomé Mitre, Historia de Belgrano y de la Independencia Argentina. Vol. 1, Ediciones Imprenta y Librería de Mayo, Buenos Aires, 1876, p. 314. The next sentence of Mitre's is glossed in the novel too. I will look at Chaves's book in more detail in Chapter Five. It is worth pointing out here, however, that he is called Julio César by El Supremo.

30. Ibid., p. 346.

31. Julio César Chaves, El Supremo Dictador. Biografía de José Gaspar de Francia, Editorial Ayacucho, Buenos Aires, 1946, p. 85. El Supremo's gloss is from p. 86. See also the passage with which I began this section.

32. See Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1984, pp. 181-204. "Ideological views, as we have seen, are also internally dialogized, and in external dialogue they are always linked with the internal rejoinders of another person, even where they assume a finished, externally monologic form of expression.", p. 279. In Bakhtin's terms then, El Supremo's

words are externally monological, and internally dialogical.

33. For the discourse of authoritarian liberalism at the time, see William H. Katra, Domingo F. Sarmiento: Public Writer (Between 1839 and 1852), Arizona State University, Tempe, 1985.

34. El Supremo also reconstructs his own political tradition which appears in the early eighteenth century in colonial Paraguay. This is the popular 'chacrero' politics of the Comunero Revolts (1721-1735). These stemmed from antipathy to the monopolisation of the trade of yerba mate by the Jesuit missions and the encomenderos, who in turn rebelled against the missions' monopolisation of native indian labour. The Spanish Crown further exacerbated the conflict by trying to impose their own representative as governor in Asunción, thereby breaking the local tradition of electing their own. As the struggle became radicalised, the forces of the Spanish Crown, the encomenderos and the native Indian armies of the missions combined to crush the 'chacreros'. In El Supremo's 'circular' the principal leader of the revolt, José de Antequera, becomes his forerunner. He says: "...Jose de Antequera y Castro, vio al llegar a Asunción la piedra de la desgracia pesando sobre el Paraguay hacía más de dos siglos. No se anduvo con muchas vueltas. La soberanía del Común es anterior a toda ley escrita, la autoridad del pueblo es superior a la del mismo rey, sentenció en el Cabildo de Asuncion. Pasmo general..."(39). Of the 'señores feudales' he says: "desde hace un siglo han traicionado la causa de nuestra Nación. Los que traicionan una vez traicionan siempre. Han tratado, seguirán tratando de venderla a los porteños, a los brasileros, al mejor postor europeo o americano."(43) The last phrase is clearly directed at the 'future' too. It is around the interests of the poor peasants that, in El Supremo's view, the nation should be built. For the Comuneros Revolt, see Adalberto López, The Revolt of the Comuneros, 1721-1735, Schenkman, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1976. In this section, moreover, El Supremo also takes the Jesuit interpretation of the revolts as represented in P. Pedro Lozano's Historia de las Revoluciones de la Provincia de Paraquay (1721-1735) to task (see p. 42).

35. Quoted by Alfred M. Seiferheld in "La guerra del 70. Un lustro trágico para América", in Ticio Escobar et. al., La Guerra del 70. Una visión fotográfica, Edición Museo del Barro, Asunción, 1981.

36. "Luego de la hecatombe del 70, el general Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, autor de Facundo...fue a morir apaciblemente en Asunción, olvidado ya de que, al final de la guerra de la Triple Alianza...había ordenado exterminar a los 'dos mil perros', combatientes paraguayos en su mayoría niños, que aún le quedaban a Solano López.", Augusto Roa Bastos, "Rafael Barrett. Descubridor de la realidad social del Paraguay", prologue to Rafael Barrett, El Dolor

Paraguayo, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas, 1978, p.XVI. Francisco Solano López makes an appearance, or at least his discourse does, in Yo el Supremo as a pupil in "Escuela No. 1, 'Patria o Muerte'" answering the question, set by El Supremo, "de como ven ellos la imagen sacrosanta de nuestro Supremo Gobierno Nacional". His answer is "Pido al Supremo Gobierno el espadín del Dictador Perpetuo, para tenerlo en custodia y usarlo en defensa de la Patria."(pp. 433, 434).

37. See Gilbert Phelps, Tragedy of Paraguay, Charles Knight, London, 1975; Leon Pomer, La Guerra del Paraguay, Centro Editor de América Latina, Buenos Aires, 1971; R. Ortega Peña & E.L. Duhalde, Baring Brothers y la historia política argentina, Editorial Sudestada, Buenos Aires, 1968; Juan Bautista Alberdi, Historia de la Guerra del Paraguay, Ediciones de la Patria Grande, Buenos Aires, 1962.

38. David Viñas, Indios, ejército y frontera, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico, 1982; Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Prólogo: Una nación para el desierto argentino" in Proyecto y construcción de una nación (Argentina 1846-1880), Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas, 1980; Oscar Oszlack, La formación del estado argentino, Editorial Belgrano, Buenos Aires, 1982.

39. David Vinas, Op. cit., p. 14, 16.

40. David Rock, Op. cit., 1987, p. 127.

41. Especially the rebellious Felipe Varela, who proclaimed in 1866, one year after the beginning of the War of the Triple Alliance: "¡Argentinos! El hermoso pabellón que San Martín, Alvear y Urquiza llevaron altivamente en cien combates...ha sido vilmente enlodado por el general Mitre, Gobernador de Buenos Aires...¡Abajo los infractores a la ley! ¡Abajo los traidores a la patria! ¡Abajo los mercaderes de cruces en la Uruguayana, a precio de oro, de lágrimas y de sangre argentina y oriental! ¡Abajo los usurpadores de las rentas y derechos de las provincias, en beneficio de un pueblo vano, déspota e indolente! ¡Soldados federales! Nuestro programa es la práctica estricta de la constitución jurada, y el orden común, la paz y la amistad con el Paraguay, y la unión con los demás Repúblicas americanas ...". See Coronel Felipe Varela, "Proclama", in Proyecto de construcción de una nación (Argentina 1846-1880), op. cit., p. 234-234.

42. See Richard Alan White, Paraguay's Autonomous Revolution. 1810-1840, University of New Mexico Press, Alberquerque, 1978.

43. See Roa Bastos's excellent article on Juan Rulfo's Pedro Páramo, "Los trasterrados de Comala", Caravelle. Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, No. 37, 1981.

44. Omar Díaz de Arce, Paraguay, Casa de las Américas, Havana, n.d., p. 18, quoted in J. F. Segovia Corvalán, Op. cit., p. 25-26.

45. In V. I. Lenin, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1975, p.4-5.

46. Augusto Roa Bastos, Hijo de Hombre, Editorial Argos Vergara, Barcelona, 1979 (1st ed., 1960), p. 46. All subsequent references will be to this edition and placed in the text in parenthesis.

47. Jean Andreu, "'Hijo de Hombre' de A. Roa Bastos: Fragmentación y Unidad", Revista Iberoamericana, Vol. XLII, No. 96-97, Julio-Diciembre, 1976, p. 478.

48. "Fue sintomático que la crítica no descubriera...la presencia mítica del desmistificador de Lo que son los yerbales, y en este relato (the chapter 'Exodo' -J.K.) una transcripción literal de la crónica de Barrett...", A. Roa Bastos, "Rafael Barrett. Descubridor de la realidad social del Paraguay", Op. cit., p.XXXI. For this 'mythical presence' of Barrett in Hijo de Hombre, see p. 145.

49. On Barrett's imprisonment see Juan Carlos Herken Krauer, "Diplomacia británica en el Río de la Plata: el 'caso Rafael Barrett' (1908-1910)", Caravelle. Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, No. 41, 1983.

50. See Jean Andreu, "Lectures anarchistes: la 'Librería' de 'La Protesta', Buenos Aires, juin 1914", Caravelle. Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, No. 45, 1985 and A. Roa Bastos, "Rafael Barrett. Descubridor de la realidad social del Paraguay", Op. cit., p. XXIX-XXXI. Roa Bastos also notes Barrett's influence on the Buenos Aires 'Boedo' group, and even on Horacio Quiroga.

51. In Manuel Domínguez, El alma de la raza, Casa Editora de Cándido Zamphirópolos, Asunción, 1918, pp. 17, 20, 31.

52. On 21 February, 1910, Barrett published "Lo que he visto" in the Asunción newspaper El Nacional. He states that "Cada paraguayo, libre dentro de una hoja de papel constitucional, es hoy un miserable prisionero de un palmo de tierra...éste es el país más desdichado de la tierra.", in El dolor paraguayo, op. cit., p. 54-55. Domínguez replied in an article in the same newspaper called "Lo que Barrett no ha visto", in which he says, referring to Barrett's illness -he was dying of tuberculosis-: "creyendo pintar al Paraguay, solo acierta pintarse a sí mismo". In 1925, the romantic nationalist historian Juan O'Leary said that Barrett's writing reflected: "las exageraciones sómbrias de su pesimismo, los cuadros tristes de lo que él

llamaba 'el dolor paraguayo' ... no eran sino los desahogos de su melancolía, indiferente a todas las manifestaciones del mundo exterior, a pesar del empeño que mostraba en aparecer preocupado de los problemas y de los incidentes de la vida nacional.", Ibid., p. 54 (note 1). For Barrett's involvement in the organisation of the working class in Asunción see Francisco Gaona, Introducción a la historia gremial y social del Paraguay, Ed. Arandú, Asunción, 1967, p. 204-260.

53. See Alejandro Losada, La literatura en la sociedad de América Latina, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, Munich, 1987, where the lack of cultural space for a critical literature articulated to popular political causes in many Latin American countries is stressed. Exile, or other forms of internationalisation, thus becomes a possible site for such articulation.

54. Despite the historical reasons for this flight, El Supremo says of the writer of Hijo de Hombre: "Macario nino desapareció...Tiempos después reapareció en una de esas innobles noveletas que publican en el extranjero los escribas migrantes. Raptaron a Macario de la realidad, lo despojaron de su buen natural para convertirlo en la irrealidad de lo escrito en un nuevo traidor."(102)

55. Augusto Roa Bastos, "América Latina en MARCHA", Marcha, 8 June, 1973, p. 9.

56. The idea of a 'segunda emancipación latinoamericana' emerges in the work of José Martí in response to the idea of 'panamericanismo' and the increasing presence of U.S. imperialism in Latin America: "...ha llegado para la América española la hora de declarar su segunda independencia.", José Martí, Política de Nuestra América, (ed. by Roberto Fernández Retamar), Siglo Veintiuno, Mexico, 1979, p. 152. Roa Bastos had suggested this necessity for Paraguay in "Paraguay ante la necesidad de una segunda independencia", Casa de las Américas, No. 32, 1965. The post-revolutionary Cuban dimension of Yo el Supremo has been hinted at by Gerald Martin in "'Yo el Supremo': The Dictator and his Script", Forum for Modern Language Studies, Vol. XV, No. 2, 1979.

57. The passage comes from a fragment of the novel entitled 'Escrito a medianoche' -probably part of his 'cuaderno privado'- in which El Supremo critically reflects on his rule. For Bonpland see Eduardo Galeano, Memorias del fuego. II. Las caras y las máscaras, Siglo Veintiuno editores, Mexico, 1984, p. 166-167.

58. D. Rock, Op. cit., p. 334-335.

59. See Ronaldo Munck et. al., Op. cit., p. 160.

60. Ernesto Laclau, "Argentina -Imperialist Strategy and the May Crisis", New Left Review, No. 62, July-August, 1970, p. 19.

61. David Rock, Op. cit., p. 358.

62. See Richard Gillespie, Soldiers of Perón. Argentina's Montoneros, Oxford Universtiy Press, Oxford, 1982, p. 36, 37. For the the importance of Catholicism in the development of Left Peronism, see the novel by Miguel Bonasso: Recuerdo de la muerte, Ediciones Era, Mexico, 1984.

63. Richard Gillespie, Op. cit., p. 37.

64. It is difficult, now, not to agree with those who have described this trust in Perón -and in Peronism's bonapartist and rigidly hierachical political structures and imaginary- as, at best, politically naive. Ibid., p. 41. See also J. J. Sebreli, Op. cit..

65. See Tomás Eloy Martínez, Op. cit..

66. With respect to the Montoneros, see Mario Esposito, "Argentina, hablan los guerrilleros", Marcha, 15 June, 1973, p. 21.

67. Augusto Roa Bastos, "El autor como lector de su obra", in Julio Peñate et. al., De Cervantes a Orovilca. Homenaje a Jean-Paul Borel, Visor Libros, Madrid, 1990, p. 154. He states that he began in 1968 in his "Nota del autor sobre 'Lucha hast el alba'", in Augusto Roa Bastos, Antología personal, Editorial Nueva Imagen, Mexico, 1980, p. 185. The author does not touch on any of the events I have mentioned here as important factors in the writing of his novel in these writings, nor, it should be pointed out, in any other that I have consultued.

68. For 'Peronist mythology', see Alberto Ciria, Política y cultura popular: la Argentina peronista, 1946-1955, Ediciones de la Flor, Buenos Aires, 1983. The picture Eva en el mundo is reproduced in Alberto Ciria, "Angels and demons", Index on Censorship, Vol. 14, No. 6, December, 1985, p.47. The first Montonero verses are taken from Tomás Eloy Martínez, Op. cit., pp. 224-225, where the intertwining of Peronism, religion and desire are also thought through. The second Montonero verse is reproduced in Andrew Graham-Yool's extremely useful chronology, De Perón a Videla, Legasa, Buenos Aires, 1989, p. 304. Eventually, there was an attempt by the Montoneros to appropriate Evita as Montonera from Perón.

69. See H. Marcuse, One Dimensional Man, Abacus, London, 1972; Enrique Dussel, Introducción a una filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana, Extemporáneos, Mexico, 1977. For criticisms of the idea of Argentina as colonial or semi-

colonial, see J. J. Sebrelli, Op. cit., and Beatriz Sarlo, "La izquierda ante la cultura: del dogmatismo al populismo", Punto de Vista, No, 20, Mayo, 1984, pp. 22-25. For a critique and contextualisation of Dussel's populist version of 'filosofía de la liberación', see Horacio Cerutti Guldberg, Filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1983. In 1973 Roa Bastos participated in a conference in the Jesuit Universidad San Salvador, in San Miguel, the province of Buenos Aires, when many of these philosophical issues were discussed. The main topic of discussion was 'lo popular'. He presented a paper called "Cultura popular en América Latina y creación literaria" in which he insists on the extremely problematic character of the 'popular'. All the papers presented were published in the magazine Stromata, Vol. 30, Nos. 1-2, 1974.

70. Beatriz Sarlo, "Intelectuales: escición o mímesis", Punto de Vista, No. 25, Diciembre, 1985, p. 2.

71. Juan José Hernández Arregui, La formación de la conciencia nacional (1930-1960), Ediciones Hachéa, Buenos Aires, 1960, p. 11. The shift in political sympathies of both Ramos -from Trotskyism- and Puiggrós -from the Communist Party- to Peronism reflect the drift I am outlining here.

72. Ibid., p. 448.

73. Ibid., p. 445.

74. Richard Gillspie, Op. cit., p. 11 and pp. 1-46, passim. For Arregui in the early 1970's see, Juan José Hernández Arregui, Peronismo y socialismo, Ediciones Hachéa, Buenos Aires, 1972. Here is a quote illustrating his conception of the 'nation' as something like a closed organism being penetrated from the outside: "Se imita a las metrópolis productoras de venenos sub-culturas...La putrefacción de la cultura de las metrópolis, el hippismo, la homosexualidad, los crímenes orgiásticos de Charles Manson, son exportados, lo mismo que los vicios de la burguesía europea o norteamericana expuestos como formas permanentes de la vida, y no como lo que son, frutos apestosos de una sociedad en decomposición.", p. 13. By 1972 Arregui's politics have become solidified into moral imperatives: "En tiempos como éste la neutralidad es cobardía.", p. 9. Fernando Solanas's recent film Sur is dedicated to Hernández Arregui -amongst others.

75. See the relevant chapter in John King's forthcoming book on Latin American cinema, Magical Reels. A History of Cinema in Latin America, Verso, London. King gives the following brief description of Alias Gardelito: "A frustrated tango singer aspires to rise out of his sordid environment, but is forced into crime and ends up a corpse on a rubbish heap. Murua shows the underside of the 'city of dreams' Buenos Aires, a degrading, poverty ridden world

where only debased activities have any chance of survival." Roa Bastos wrote the screenplay with the novelist Tomás Eloy Martínez.

76. Another writer involved in this venture in the 1960's was Juan José Saer, who dedicated his novel El limonero real (1974) to Roa Bastos.

77. The term 'Third Cinema' brings to mind the well-known idea that Peronism constituted a 'third way' between capitalism and communism. For Solanas and Getino it referred to the 'way' between different systems of filmic practice: Hollywood and 'auteur' cinema (i.e. the cinema industry and the art house cinema). See Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, "Toward a Third Cinema", Afterimage, No. 3, Summer, 1971 pp. 17-35 (originally written in 1969). Although Roa Bastos did not write films for these directors it is not likely that he was ignorant of the developments I have described.

78. In Marx's terms, this constitutes the determining moment of consumption on production. See Karl Marx, Grundrisse, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977, pp. 90-94.

79. See Alberto J. Pla, Ideología y método en la historiografía argentina, Ediciones Nueva Visión, Buenos Aires, 1972.

80. Juan Bautista Alberdi, Escritos Póstumos Vol. 5, Sarrat, Buenos Aires, 1897, p. 29. For 'biografías de la barbarie' see Adriana Rodríguez Pérsico, "Sarmiento y la biografía de la barbarie", Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos. Los complementarios, 3, Abril, 1990, pp.37-58.

81. See Tulio Halperín Donghi, El revisionismo histórico argentino, Siglo Veintiuno, Buenos Aires, 1970.

82. See Tulio Halperín Donghi, "El revisionismo histórico argentino como visión decadentista de la historia nacional", Punto de Vista, No. 23, Abril, 1985, pp. 9-17.

83. See Ernesto Laclau, Op. cit., p. 180, and Richard Gillespie, Op. cit., pp. 1-3.

84. Bartolomé Mitre, Op. cit., p. 383.

85. Ibid., p. 381.

86. Ibid., p. 382, 383.

87. The words in italics are reproduced directly from Ibid., p. 383. El Supremo, however, 'corrects' the syntax by surpressing comas (see the original text). He also changes the verbal tense of, for example, comprometer. In Mitre it is written in the subjunctive. In El Supremo's text, the future tense gives his words the certainty of

someone who knows the future (and who can thus, of course, challenge Mitre in this intertextual battle). Finally he changes Mitre's singular and nationalist "pueblo argentino" for "nuestro pueblos".

88. Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia appears as an enemy of 'civilización' in D.F. Sarmiento's Facundo. Civilización y barbarie, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1970: " No valía la pena saber por que en el Paraguay, tierra desmontada por la mano *sabia* del jesuitismo, un *sabio* (Francia, J.K.) educado en las aulas de la antigua Universidad de Córdoba abre una nueva página en la historia de las aberraciones del espíritu humano, encierra a un pueblo en sus límites de bosques primitivos y, borrando las sendas que conducen a esta China recóndita, se oculta, y esconde durante treinta años su presa en las profundidades del continente americano, y sin dejarla lanzar un solo grito, hasta que, muerto él mismo por la edad y la quieta fatiga de estar inmóvil pisando un pueblo sumiso, éste puede al fin, con voz extenuada y apenas inteligible, decir a los que vagan por sus inmediaciones: '¡Vivo aún!; pero ¿cuánto he sufrido!'?...¡Que transformación ha sufrido el Paraguay!; ¡qué cardenales y llagas ha dejado el yugo sobre su cuello, que no oponía resistencia!" p. 20.

89. El Supremo states that: "el Norte de la Revolución Paraguaya es labrar la felicidad del suelo natal, o sepultarnos entre sus escombros. Decisión irrevocable"(225). This cannot but be an allusion to the effects of the War of the Triple Alliance.

90. This rhetorical operation is, in the event, quite a simple one. As one would expect in a biography of a 'civilised' man, Mitre says of Belgrano that he felt "una repulsión instintiva" towards Francia ('barbarie'). Ibid., p. 381. All El Supremo has to do to counter this is to show a moment of intimacy between the two. This he does on pages 275-278 of the novel: "Tengo pocos amigos...Uno de ellos, el general Manuel Belgrano..."(275) etc.. This section is a dialogue of the dead. It should be noted that Belgrano favoured constitutional monarchy for the area, and to this extent differs from El Supremo. El Supremo's sympathy for Belgrano emerged, as we noted below, when the latter led the military expedition to Paraguay and immediately realised he was leading a conquest. Alberdi appears in the text as 'Idrebal', see p. 119.

91. For a brief mention of guerrilla movements in Paraguay during the 1960's and 1970's, see Paraguay. Power Game, Latin American Bureau, London, 1980. p.34-35. They were all wiped out very quickly by the repressive forces of the Stroessner regime.

92. On María de los Angeles, although from a different point of view, see María Elena Carballo, "Lo femenino y lo absoluto en 'Yo el Supremo'", in Fernando Burgos (ed.), Op.

cit., pp. 101-108.

93. Before Isasi leaves with his daughter, María de los Angeles, El Supremo relates that she "...me da un beso en cada mejilla. ¡Adios, padr...!, solloza..."(335). This begs the question: was she really his daughter? In Hijo de Hombre it is arguable that social history is similarly -at times- reduced to family (biological) history, e.g. the Jara family.

94. El Supremo fantasises with giving birth and nurturing himself: "Mamé mi propia leche, ordeñada de mis senos frontales. Me incorporé lentamente empuñando el fusil."(309) Smell, and desire, are interlinked throughout the novel with birth and death. For another example of how smell and desire are intertwined and subversive of authority, see the short story "Borrador de un informe" in Augusto Roa Bastos, El baldío, Losada, Buenos Aires, 1966.

PART TWO

PARAGUAYAN PALIMPSEST

Leovigildo Urruraga, a seven-year old pupil at the "Escuela No. 5. 'El Paraguay Independiente'", also answers the question "de como ven ellos la imagen sacrosanta de nuestro Supremo Gobierno". She responds in the following way:

> "El Supremo es el Hombre-Dueño-del-susto. Papá dice que es un Hombre que nunca duerme. Escribe día y noche y nos quiere al revés. Dice también que es una Gran Pared alrededor del mundo que nadie puede atrevesar. Mamá dice que es una araña peluda siempre tejiendo su tela en la Casa del Gobierno. Nadie escapa de ella, dice. Cuando hago algo malo, mi mamá me dice: El Karaí va a meter una pata peluda por la ventana y te va a llevar!"(434)

This negative version of El Supremo ("nos quiere al revés') is extremely important for it provides a clue to the intensity with which Roa Bastos himself approaches and writes about the dictator Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia. In Leovigildo Urrurraga's composition, the Supreme Government, that is El Supremo himself, is represented as an overtly politicised 'bogey-man', and the spider-State he embodies graphically described as present within the familial scene as a threat from which no one can escape. In other words, as a feature of family discipline regimenting the codes of chidren's behaviour. This relationship to power, as described by Leovigildo, is highly ambiguous: at the very moment in which El Supremo is denied -he is an horrifically overbearing and imprisoning presence-, his power is, nevertheless, affirmed as a disciplinary figure structuring and sheering up family relations. This kind of presence, in which the state as individually embodied in El Supremo ('el Karaí'- Guarani for chief) intervenes in the

family, is further elaborated and dramatised in two of Roa Bastos' short stories: Lucha hasta el alba, Roa Bastos' first short story, originally written when he was thirteen years-old (and published not long after Yo el Supremo), and El sonámbulo, a fragment of the as yet unpublished novel El fiscal, published in 1984. In both cases we are shown how the figure of the dictator of Paraguay marks either the writer as a character of the story, or its narrator.[1]

The pupil's name is significant. If we break it in two, and add the letter *a*, we have '*Leo-vigila*do'. It is as if the composition were also a cry for help. In Lucha hasta el alba the young child-narrator writes hidden from his father's authoritarian and vigilant gaze. Projecting his desire in the act of writing he re-works the biblical story told him by his mother about the struggle between Jacob and the Angel and, indeed, becomes Jacob himself. In an inversion of the original biblical narrative, however, he kills the Angel. He then looks at its face: "Y en esa cabeza descubrió el rostro de filudo perfil de ave de rapiña del Karaí-Guasú, tal como lo mostraban los grabados de la época. Pero también vió en la cabeza muerta el rostro de su padre."[2] Roa Bastos has said that the story represents "un doble parricidio, al menos simbólico."[3] The reason for his symbolic revenge against his father is given at the beginning of the story. As the young boy waits until everyone in the household is asleep so he can begin to write, he remembers "Los verdugones del castigo de la

tarde", which "le escocieron de nuevo hasta el hueso; en las rodillas, las punzadas de los maices sobre los cuales el padre lo mandó hincarse durante horas, como de costumbre". Forced to kneel in humiliation, his arms out-stretched as if on a cross, his father shouts at him:

> "¡Ahí lo tienen al futuro tirano del Paraguay! ¡Rebelde ahora, déspota después!... A vergajazos voy a enderezar a este cachorro del maldito Karaí-Guasú!"[4]

Although hated politically -the father's actions also symbolically enact a displaced and cruel revenge against the dictator- the narrator-heroe's father mobilises the figure of El Supremo ('el Karaí') culturally, as a symbol within his own disciplinary regime, identifying himself and the boy as possible dictatorial figures too. In killing the Angel, the boy kills them both. In this oedipal narrative, however, the boy does not return home to his mother -the storyteller-for he dies on the way in a bar.[5]

In <u>El sonámbulo</u> the narrator Silvestre Carmona is marked by Dr. Francia at birth: "Nací en la Villa de San Pedro, el 20 de septiembre de 1840, el mismo día, mes y año en que murió el Dictador Perpetuo José Gaspar Rodrígues de Francia." The dictator's death is thus is own beginning. Because of this coincidence, he becomes the target of his brothers', and especially his father's, jokes:

> "-Silvestre será el sucesor del Finado- decía a menudo-. ¡Mírenlo ahí con los ojos revueltos hacia adentro calculando como levantar su Reino del Terror! Mi padre no guardaba buena memoria, justo es decirlo, del Supremo Dictador. Por cuestión de un escrito donde aparecía la omisión de una fórmula pesada y servil a que se mandaban sujetar en aquel

entonces las solicitudes, lo mandó poner preso. Al cabo de un año, lo dejó en libertad a costa de la confiscación de parte de sus propiedades, que distribuyó entre otros pobladores más necesitados que él. En rueda de parientes o de amigos solía relatar escenas de aquellas mazmorras; el tono risueño las volvía más siniestros. Contaba que una vez por una tragaluz había visto pasar al Supremo; como de costumbre me señaló a mí: -¡Un hombre del tamaño de esa criatura!...si está escrito: Silvestre va a ser el sucesor del Finado, apenas se muera don Carlos. Las risotadas de mi padre me arrancaban de las pálidas ensoñaciones en que yo solía caer. Conteniendo las ansias de llanto, me refugiaba en los lugares más oscuros de la casa."[6]

In fact Silvestre is a writer: like Patiño in Yo el Supremo, he becomes the secretary and scribe of a dictator, the son of Don Carlos, Francisco Solano López -whom he eventually betrays by leading Brazilian troops to the dictator's hiding place, where he is killed, and thus ending the War of the Triple Alliance. The text we are presented with is a document written by Silvestre relating his actions, and, like in Yo el Supremo, found by a compiler in the State Archives.

Although not as dramatic, nor as cruel, as in Lucha hasta el alba, El sonámbulo also stages the inscription of the state in the family as one of the sites of its reproduction. The family scene thus becomes, insofar as the figure of Francia is concerned, a sometimes frightening theatre of power. It is a child's subjectivity, situated outside of the family sphere and expressing a private desire to write, or an inward looking disposition, -that is, a space of subjective freedom- that is at play in this process. In response the state, as identified with El

Supremo, is beaten into the young writer in what constitutes, at least in the first passage, an extremely violent interpellation -so much so that the term seems almost out of place-, and in both cases the boy is identified with El Supremo and marked as his inheritor. Furthermore, it is out of this sometimes violent identification that writing emerges: in the first case, as a story of 'symbolic parricide', and in the second as betrayal (constituting, in effect, a displaced parricide).[7]

It is to an account of the place of Dr. Francia in Paraguayan political culture that this part is dedicated. The above analysis has foregrounded his importance in two of Roa Bastos' own short stories. By locating the figure of the dictator so closely to the emergence of writing itself, it may not be too adventurous to suggest that these stories in fact constitute major reflections on the importance of Francia for the author's own practice (the ruthless but paternal figure of Dr. Francia also appears in Hijo de Hombre). Here it was the family as a social institution that mediated the relation between the dictator and the act of writing (in this sense, it may be that Roa Bastos was 'always already' predisposed to write about the state as it subsequently emerged as an object of his literary concern during the 'populist rupture' of the 1930's and 1940's). Below, it is to other such social institutions that I will turn. In chapter four, I will briefly approach the question theoretically by way of a critique of one of the

most important articles written on Yo el Supremo. I will then, in chapter five, look at the kinds of cultural materials on Francia used by Roa Bastos to compile his work. In this way, I hope to show how the figure of Francia has become an important site for the struggle for power in Paraguay.

CHAPTER FOUR
HISTORY: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT.

> "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was'... It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger."[8]

Many of the most interesting and disseminated readings of Yo el Supremo have been -for want of better words- structuralist in spirit and formalist in argumentation. One of the most important is that rehearsed by Jean Andreu in "Modalidades del relato en 'Yo el Supremo' de Augusto Roa Bastos: lo Dicho, el Dictado y el Diktat".[9] In this article Andreu begins by, on the one hand, recognising and gesturing towards the constant preoccupation that most Paraguayan novelists seem to have with regard to the history of their country, but then, on the other, he goes on to argue for the a-historicity of the novel in question. Whilst acknowledging that his reading is a partial one, the logic of his argument, nevertheless, is to radically bracket the work off from a conception of history that would include both the present and subjectivity as two of its aspects and an appreciation of writing (both history and novels) as a transformative practice. My intention here, then, is to make a brief -although I hope not unfair- critical detour through Andreu's article so as to then return in my next chapter to the Paraguayan context which constitutes his own point of departure. I am not sure that I agree with the Durkheimian flavour of Frederic Jameson's assertion that

"...all literature, no matter how weakly, must be informed by what we have called a political unconscious, that all literature must be read as a symbolic meditation on the destiny of community";[10] it does, however, point towards the kinds of differences I have with Andreu's interpretation of Yo el Supremo.

To begin with I must drastically summarise -translating back into prose the table Andreu includes at the end of his article setting out some of his findings- what is an exhaustive and at times brilliant description of the novel's 'interior'(the operative word here, as we shall see). For this critic, what we find there is a 'YO' (the dictator) whose relationships with others take on a particular shape or style depending on the relation of 'supremacy' he is practi$ing at different moments of the narrative as a whole. These, according to Andreu, are basically twofold: firstly, as "dueño de la historia" in which 'YO' is the sole protagonist. Here, the dictator ('YO') has: (a) political power over individuals, mediated orally (for example, with his secretary Patiño); (b) state power over space, mediated visually (for example, by surveying his surroundings and the 'cosmos' through his 'lente-de-ver-lejos'); and (c) metaphysical power over time, mediated mentally (as expressed, for example, in the dictator's 'Cuaderno privado', where he meditates, amongst other things, on his own births and deaths). Secondly, as "dueño del discurso" in which 'YO' is the sole narrator. The modalities of this

discourse are: (a) 'el diktat' to individualised characters, whose form of enunciation is interlocutory or dialogistic (for example, to Patiño); (b) 'el dictado' to the 'people-masses', whose form of enunciation is monologistic (this is, according to Andreu, the domain of the 'Circular perpetua'); and (c) 'lo dicho' to El Supremo himself, and whose form of enunciation is the soliloquy (this is, again, the domain of the dictator's 'Cuaderno privado').

As far as it is at all possible, Andreu's is an excellent description of certain basic aspects of novel.[11] The fact that the dictator is both 'dueño de la historia' and 'dueño del discurso' in the way Andreu has outlined, provides him with the verificatory material for his initial hypothesis concerning the title of the novel -Yo el Supremo- which, he stresses -and then goes on to show- could be extended to the whole of the work:

> "'Yo el Supremo' es la historia del Poder Supremo (the object or predicate -J.K.) inscripta en el discurso de un narrador (the subject -J.K.) inmanente a este discurso y a esta historia."[12]

Put simply, this means that in Yo el Supremo we are presented with a (supreme) narrator who (supremely) tells his own (supreme) story. But, what significance does Andreu derive from his hypothesis-conclusion? To understand it I must briefly reconstruct the theoretical postulates he brings to bear on the text, for what Andreu is attempting is to map the novel onto certain grammatical structures of language as described by Émile Benveniste (and as subsequently re-articulated into structuralist literary

theory by, for example, Tzvetan Todorov and Gérard Genette).

In Benveniste's view, the pronouns YO/TÚ/ÉL (I will use the Spanish for the sake of continuity) are those instances of 'langue' which enable the process of any subject's individuation or identification as he or she enters an already given language structure (grammar) -in psychoanalytic terms, the 'symbolic order' (as is well known, according to Lacan, the unconscious is 'structured like a language').[13] Within this order, YO and TU stand for subjectivity and the realm of intersubjective purposeful discourse. They represent, in Benveniste's view, both the present and future verbal tenses which, he suggests, are a-historical. In contrast EL designates an 'it', an object confronting the subject from its outside like, again according to Benveniste, the past, history. Here, then, EL represents the historical past tense. Some of these ideas were subsequently used in structuralist narratology -in an attempt to provide literary theory with a 'scientific' foundation- so as to re-think the well-known Russian Formalist opposition 'fable/plot' and the traditional- although perhaps in the end most interesting- difference between 'diagesis' and 'mimesis' as found in Plato and Aristotle. In this context (hi)story designates an abstract or ideal order of facts or events prior to their narration in discourse (that is, their textualisation).[14] The work of all these writers is in fact much more complex, but this summary is adequate enough to grasp Andreu's point of

departure in his analysis of Yo el Supremo:

> "De ahí que la fórmula 'Yo el Supremo', cuando pasa a ser denominación convencional e histórica para designar a Francia, se apocope en 'El Supremo': al borrar el 'Yo', se borra también la dimensión del presente incluída en este 'Yo' para que la nueva fórmula pueda remitir a la dimensión del pasado, única dimensión pertinente en el discurso histórico. El presente y el futuro quedan excluídos del discurso histórico; en cambio, el narrador de Yo el Supremo los utiliza abundantemente en su discurso *como para subrayar todavía más el carácter a-histórico de la obra*. El enunciado 'Yo el Supremo', por la marcada subjetividad claramente reivindicada, transgrede las normas del discurso histórico al uso, tal como se practica, por ejemplo en este caso, en obras como El Dictador del Paraguay de Guillermo Cabanellas o El Supremo Dictador de Julio César Chaves. Yo el Supremo aparece entonces como un discurso a-histórico sobre la Historia."(my emphasis)[15]

The particularly damaging moment here is the shift from the grammatical structure of the phrase 'Yo el Supremo', the title of the novel in which the subject 'Yo' appears, to the work as a whole, which is then deemed a-historical because of its overt discursive subjectivity (that is, because 'Yo' is 'dueño de la historia'). At issue here are two different and eventually opposing conceptions of 'history' which have their etymological origins in the French 'histoire' and the Latin 'historia' (from the Greek root word 'istoria'). Very briefly: both have the basic sense of knowledge tied to a story of events or a narrative of past events. Subsequently, in the English for example, and very much influenced by the development of science and the novel form, a difference was established between story -in relation to imagined events- and history -to real past events (in the Spanish: 'relato' and 'historia'). During the seventeenth century, however, another meaning emerged that is associated

primarily with Vico, and later with Hegel. In this sense history referred to human self-development and, according to Raymond Williams, lo-ses "its exclusive association with the past and becomes connected not only to the present but also to the future."[16] In the German this is given in the difference between 'Historie' -concerned with the past- and the more philosophical 'Geschichte' -processes involving past, present and future. Raymond Williams suggests that this modern meaning draws on various intellectual systems: the Enlightenment's sense of progress and development, the idealist Hegelian concept of 'world-historical process'- associated politically with the French Revolution and more recently with socialist movements- and, finally, with Marxism, for which the products of the past are active in the present and may shape the future.[17] In this context of conflicting meanings, what does it mean to say that a novel like Yo el Supremo is 'a-historical'?

Two things are evident from Andreu's statement. Firstly, he is not referring to history in the last sense, to 'Geschichte', but rather to 'historia' in the first discursive sense: Yo el Supremo is not, he says, a narrative of past events like Cabanellas and Chaves' works of historiography (which are, in fact, historical biographies) in which Dr. Francia is an object of the past whose story is told in the third person. The dictator, instead, tells his own story in the subjective first. Secondly, however, from the point of view of the alternative more procesual sense of

history ('Geschichte'), the perspective of the present is no criterion for a-historicity. The latter is, rather, integral to it and should thus be present in its narrating. Indeed it always is, however masked. This is the gist of the passage quoted above from Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" -a polemical critique of the natural science paradigm of positivist historiography or, what he calls, 'historicism'. It is this positivist conception of history that is inscribed into the structuralist approach adopted both by Benveniste and Andreu. In this view too, historical events and facts of the past are constituted as an 'other' completely separate from the present and the subject of knowledge -the historian- and thus merely available to the latter to connect in a series of causal and temporal relations constituting a narrative whilst simultaneously wiping his or her own presence away -giving the impression that the events tell themselves or unfold naturally. From a Benjaminian point of view, this would merely reproduce the socially and politically dominant -thus his suggestion that historical materialists should "brush history against the grain" so as to shatter the continuity between past and present that ideologically justifies the bourgeois status quo.[18] Basing himself on these observations, a critic of the significance of Benveniste's pronominal oppositions has pointed out that "to ignore their interrelation ('YO'/ 'TÚ'/'ÉL' -J.K.) is to ignore that I/you can only function as the deictic categories for the subject of en/unciation after the passage through the third

person; a passage which allows this pronoun to assume both personal and impersonal forms. Similarly discours is determined in its form by histoire for it is the involvement of the subject of the enunciation in histoire that determines its appearance in the enounced of discours."[19] Thus, for example, the form of involvement of the subject of enunciation in histoire in the traditional realist novel is to attempt to wipe away its presence in discours so as to thus give the narrative the appearance of objectivity. A similar procedure would be involved in 'conventional' historiography too. But just as Francia was an impediment to 'progress' conceived as the 'natural' historical movement towards 'civilización' (he was 'barbaric'), El Supremo too, in his very subjectivity, spoils traditional historical narrative.

Now, the idea that the past may have an order "independently of its present enunciation"[20] is not exactly what Andreu is suggesting, although it is implied. He is, however, denying the historicity of the present and of the discursive exhibition of subjectivity in historical narrative. This is what Benjamin, with his reference to the 'flash' of memory, explicitly challenges -as does the second conception of history outlined above- for here the past returns to take place within the subject, in the present, in ways s/he cannot entirely control.[21]

As pointed out above, Andreu does note that his reading

is a partial one, concerned with the dictator's ('YO') dictatorial 'textual system'. He also notes -marginally, it should be added- that there are certain narrative voices and texts that transgress this order. Amongst these he includes the following pronominal fracture: "Fractura del YO-personaje en YO-EL por imposibilidad de compaginar la subjetividad con la objetividad en un personaje ÚNICO", which thus destabilises 'YO' as 'dueño del discurso' and 'dueño de la historia' (see Chapter Seven, below).[22] Andreu, however, does not take this into account in his study of the work. Curious, to say the least, when it is a study based on this very pronominal structure. In contrast, I have attempted to show in Part One how the 'YO/ÉL' fracture was precisely the place through which two real figures -Roa Bastos and Dr. Francia- entered the text -as El Supremo and the Compiler- and in doing so pointed towards an historical 'exterior' the novel both presupposes and produces: Francia's dictatorship as the historical model for the work and the author as narrative instance. We also saw how it thus became the place for the novel's inscription into the political logic of the historical present of its production (signalled by the crises in the Liberal state).

Recognition of the pronominal fracture thus threatens to undermine Andreu's description of Yo el Supremo as an a-historical work whose narrative structure is radically turned towards its 'insides' -which not only separates it off from concrete human practice, but also seems to

reproduce an ideology of 'the Book' whose meaning is only to be found in its description, rather than its inscription into a possible multiplicity of contexts.

Benjamin's reference to memory reveals, on the other hand, that in his view, the past, whilst not having an independent order as such, may have determinant effects in the present -which, furthermore, are significant for the future. As Adorno has noted, "History does not merely touch on language, but takes place in it."[23] Thus language, whilst containing history, cannot just organise it as it pleases, for it too is determined (in other words, there is also a history of language and discourse). It is this mutual historical determination of past on present and present on past that, I think, is operative in Yo el Supremo. The novel poses history as a problem (the 'making' and 're-making' of history I touched on above). For example, it asks: how do you represent history, and if you do, what are its historical effects?

Yo el Supremo is not written in the past tense like the 'discurso histórico al uso' because it is, in part, a critique of the positivist conception of history Andreu's article presupposes. Indeed, in the novel, El Supremo rebels against such works as Cabanellas' El Dictador del Paraquay and Chaves' El Supremo Dictador, undermining their supposed objectivity and revealing their status as ideological constructions, whilst simultaneously using them

as its own artistic materials. And the past speaks because the figure of Francia remains active as a representation in the present -as we have seen in my discussion of Lucha hasta el alba and El sonámbulo, where the figure of Francia (the past) is inscribed into the family as law (the present)- legitimising relations of power. El Supremo points out that "La quimera ha ocupado el lugar de mi persona" -he has become a mythical animal "bamboleándose en el vacío"(15). He goes on to order Patiño to look up the meaning of the word 'quimera' in the dictionary. His secretary's answer provides a clue to the novel's composition:

> "*Idea falsa, desvarío, falsa imaginación* dice, Excelencia. Eso voy siendo en la realidad y en el papel. También dice, Señor: *Monstruo fabuloso que tenía cabeza de león, vientre de cabra y cola de dragón.* Dicen que eso fuí."(15)

Chimera, like El Supremo (and the 'cizaña'), is a radically hybrid animal, both one and many. In Yo el Supremo Roa Bastos has reproduced this hybridity by representing the dictator as a 'complex referent', focalised from a multiplicity of points of view (like those of the school pupils).[24] Moreover, in doing so, he uses and rearticulates those very discursive materials that have arguably created that hybrid myth -some of which are historiographical. The result is an extremely complex -almost cubist- vision of Dr. Francia. This complexity is not only evident in the discursive materials Roa Bastos puts to use in the novel, but also in its surface texture, and the way he has organised its signs so as to constantly undermine and deconstruct the possibility of taking El Supremo's own

version of his history, or that of any other of the voices in the novel, at his word. It is to a description of this textual surface that I now turn.

It has been said that Yo el Supremo is a difficult novel to read.[25] This may be because there is, arguably, a certain density about the text which poses certain difficulties to the continuous linear reading typical of traditional realist and historiographic narrative in which the reader's gaze is ennabled to traverse the work -moving from word to word, sentence to sentence...chapter to chapter- with relative ease and fluidity. This is a movement which, at one and the same time, depends on being unhindered or disturbed by the narrator, and also guided through the text by the latter's privileged knowledge of the story's end.[26] Yo el Supremo, however, undermines this kind of narrative consumption by forcing the reader's gaze to pause, to return over the already read, and to glide down to the bottom of the page and back again. In this sense, the reader's eye isn't allowed to move through the text following its (that is, El Supremo's or the Compiler's) narrative line in uninterrupted continuity, but rather to survey it as if confronted by an architectonic construction. In this way, the text imposes on the reader the experience of a staggered narrative in which diachrony is momentarily reduced to synchrony and linear reading to spatial reading, before being taken up again. So, there are reasons for the experience of discontinuity in reading the work, and these

have to do with its style and the particular forms in which the text assembles the plurality of dialogues that make it up, and stages its intertextuality, as a compilation-construction. Indeed the text gives us instructions on how to read it: "¿Qué le parecen las páginas del Libro en el Paraguay? Aquí tengo que profundizar Excelencia. Hurgar capa tras capa hasta lo más hondo. Leer de derecha a izquierda, del revés, del derecho, hacia arriba, hacia abajo.". El Supremo then goes on to make a further-'impossible'- recomendation: "Aquí debe leer estas páginas con una pasión desinteresada. Absolutamente desinteresada. El que lograra esto iniciaría una especie única en este planeta."(284) -objectivity, in any absolute sense, he suggests, is impossible for the human species. This is because they are also subjects.[27]

At one level the novel is composed of a variety of monologues and dialogues through which the dictator re-tells his-story, either engaging with himself (as in portions of the 'Cuaderno privado') so as to ascertain a balance of his achievements, or with others (most notably with his functionaries in the 'Circular perpetua', his secretary Patiño in the 'Apuntes' the latter records of their conversations, and with other characters or voices, e.g. the Compiler, his dog Sultán etc.) so as to defend his project. Paradoxically, it is the way that the dialogistic moments of the novel flow into each other that contributes to the experience of discontinuity in the process of reading it:

the pauses and diacritical marks that generally identify each of the participants' voices and words by separating them off from others are absent, undermining their individualised allocation as the voices of autonomous characters. Here is an extreme example:

> "¿Te consideras un buen cristiano? Señor, santulario no soy pero mi creencia en la cruz no puedo asencillar. Ha sido siempre mi socorro, Señor, y tú has sido el bribón más redomado en cien años. ¿Qué puede entonces significar la cruz para tí?"(438)

The effects of the blurring of the subject of enunciation by the enunciated are threefold: firstly, it forces the reader to re-read so as to identify the voices; secondly, in doing so, it contributes to giving the text an appearance of solidity to the eye; and thirdly, it suggests that the body of the text is made up of a long mono-dialogue between the dictator and his phantasmatic doubles. The discourse of the dictator's troubled consciousness is thus made up of many: "Los demás son lentes a través de los cuales leemos en nuestras propias mentes."(69)[28]

On the other hand, the dictator's discourse can be at times noticeably <u>aphoristic</u>. Phrases or sentences are charged with meaning, thereby becoming apparently semi-autonomous. This form of production of knowledge is ambiguously philosophical: 'truth' is revealed anti-systematically in 'flashes' or condensed 'gems' of thought, but which in the novel are nevertheless organised syntagmatically in short, more or less self-contained phrases. Here is El Supremo on the nature of memory:

> "Los que lo saben no tienen memoria. Los memoriones son casi siempre antidotados imbéciles. A más de malvados embaucadores. O algo peor todavía...El hombre de buena memoria no recuerda nada porque no olvida nada."(10-11)

The supression of conjunctions linking phrases to one another also tends to produce a 'stuttering' discourse -in which the reader is asked to pause before moving on again- culminating at times, as in this example, in something akin to an aphorism demanding of -at least- some readers to re-read the phrase and ask 'What does this mean?'. It thus provides a space for reflection and momentarily disrupts identification with the 'YO' who is speaking and non-reflective narrative consumption.[29] The novel, therefore, whilst engaging the reader demands his or her autonomy as a thinking subject. Which means that it undermines the possibility of the dictator's discourse occupying her/him.

The novel is also peppered with notes at the foot of its pages. They are mostly made up of quotes from other texts, offering different points of view on what the dictator is discussing, and explanatory observations by the Compiler. These also appear within the main body of the text, thus exhibiting not only the role of the Compiler in organising and composing the work, but also indicating possible subtle identifications between his role and that of the dictator- who also at times invades the Compiler's terrain at the foot of the page-: both put discourse in <u>order</u> (the novel begins with the following phrase: "Yo el Supremo Dictador de la República. Ordeno..."(7). Here again, the effect that the

novel as a compilation has on its reading is to halt horizontal narrative consumption and send the eye along the vertical axis of the page in search of another point of view and/or comment. In addition, the use of a different typescript for these notes (and the reproduction of manuscript for such texts as the 'pasquín') also disrupts continuity at the level of the novel's surface texture.

Roa Bastos has significantly divided his work into unnumbered chapters or sections, each of which are in turn sub-divided into fragments or blocks of writing giving them the appearance of being autonomous segments which might be removed from the work and read in isolation, even placed elsewhere. This autonomy is also underlined by the fact that they are sometimes incomplete, coming to an abrupt end with bracketed comments from the Compiler -one supposes- noting: "...(quemado el resto del folio)" -and giving the impression that the text is made up of found burnt documents. Between each fragment there are blank spaces that impose gaps in the reading process, perhaps so that the reader may add his or her own commentary. Likewise, some of the chapters themselves give an impression of autonomy, as if the novel were composed of a series of separate variations on a single theme (dictatorship: the many faced Chimera).[30] Indeed the second section of the novel has been published separately in an anthology of Roa Bastos' writings with the title "La lección de escritura". Even El Supremo's 'Circular perpetua' is dictated in 'entregas'.[31]

Like the mythical figure of El Supremo, the novel as a whole is composed of many different parts, and this is reflected in the way Roa Bastos has organised a complex pattern of signifiers into a multiplicity of points of view of the dictator (for example, contemporary travellers and future historians, amongst others), and against which his 'own' discourse is ranged. Similarly, it also provides the reader with the space for non-identification, distance and reflection on its stuttering narrative, underlining the demand for re-reading: "Esa segunda lectura" which "con un movimiento al revés revela lo que está velado en el texto..."(421).

Positivist historiography uses a 'documentary model' in its reconstruction of the past. This involves, argues Dominick LaCapra, a "fetish of archival research" in which "the basis of research is 'hard' facts derived from the critical sifting of sources, and the purpose of historiography is either to furnish narrative accounts and 'thick descriptions' of documented facts or to submit the historical record to analytic procedures of hypothesis-formation, testing and explanantion. The historical imagination is limited to plausibly filling in gaps in the record, and 'throwing new light' on a phenomenon requires the discovery of hitherto unknown information. It does not mean seeing the phenomenon differently or transforming our knowledge of it through reinterpretation. Indeed all sources tend to be treated in narrowly documentary terms,

that is, in terms of factual or referential propositions that may be derived from them to provide information about specific times and places."[32] In this mode of historical investigation the researcher adopts a monologic relation to his or her sources, which are then re-el/aborated in a narrative form which downplays the relation between the object and the subject of knowledge. This is, for example, Andreu's historical model. In Yo el Supremo, in contrast, a dialogical or what LaCapra 'calls an 'interactive model' is in operation. The Compiler's raw materials speak back to him. Indeed, as a work of the imagination, the novel may exemplify a "discourse that allows for the mutual -at times mutually challenging- interchange of 'documentary' and 'rhetorical' dimensions of language" which, LaCapra goes on to suggest, "may further a broader conception of historical knowledge itself -one that gives a new twist to the venerable idea that history is both 'science' and 'art'."[33]

The point is that Roa Bastos has used those very materials -documents- that have constituted Francia as a hybrid myth as the materials for his own work. They constitute what Georges Martin has called the novel's "infra-texte".[34] In a recent interview, Roa Bastos has told of his dramatic relationship to these materials on Francia which, in part at least, confirms LaCapra's 'interactive model':

> "Cuando debí enfrentar el trabajo literario de Yo el Supremo, me dió siempre la sensación de estar ante un palimpsesto, ante una espesa capa de pintura superpuesta que dejaba transparentar en el fondo una

> imagen muy borrosa (of Francia- J.K.). Había que tratar entonces de radiografiar para ir hasta el fondo, hasta el hueso. Como yo no tenía Carbono-14 ni Rayos X para penetrar esa materia llena de reverbaciones y cristalizaciones, se me ocurrió que había que despegar esas escrituras superpuestas, como quien despega las pinturas que se han hecho sobre otras mas antiguas y para esto debe trabajar con ácido. Había por supuesto el riesgo de encontrar sólo el vacío o la corrosión, pero también eso era una cara de la realidad. En cierta forma el sistema de trabajo fue ése: ir aplicando elementos de carácter revulsivo (ácidos, catalizadores) para ir despegando esas trazas de pinturas superpuestas, e ir llegando a lo que podía ser el dibujo o la escritura originales."[35]

According to Gérard Genette, a palimpsest is an example of a kind of literary relation called hypertextuality: "J'entends par la toute relation unissant un texte B (que j'appellerai hypertexte) á un texte anterieur A (que j'appellerai, bien sur, hypotexte) sur lequel il se greffe d'une maniére que n'est pas celle du commentaire". And when describing such literary practices as 'bricolage' (the process of making something new out of the old) he again resorts to this image: "...sur le même parchemain, un texte se superpose á un autre qu'il ne dissimule pas tout á fait, mais qu'il laisse voir par transparence."[36] In these kinds of work, he further suggests, the reader is involved in a relational reading, that is, in reading more than one text at the same time ('capa tras capa'). To paraphrase Bahktin again, the reader also reads the text of the novel 'with a side-ways glance' (at others).

It is clear that when reading Yo el Supremo the reader is confronted at any one moment with more than one text. As we saw above in relation to Mitre's Historia de Belgrano...,

this dialogue between different texts is foregrounded to a considerable extent. Nevertheless, the form this takes becomes quite complicated with regard to the figure of Francia because, in Roa Bastos' view, his 'hypotexte' is already a palimpsest -and "llena de reverbaciones". In working on it (with acids and the like) and subsequently recomposing it in the form of the novel, it is arguable that he is, in fact, adding another layer to the object which is his point of departure. Thus both 'hypotexte' and 'hypertexte' form part of a palimpsest whose making and re-making is not totally controlled by the author. This is where Roa Bastos' work would seem to be slightly different from the 'interactive model' outlined by LaCapra. In contrast to the latter's rather rationalist and 'happy' description of the relation between the texts of the past and the work in the present, Roa Bastos' description is very dramatic, violent and emotional: he burns away at the palimpsest with acids.[37] This intense relationship to the figure of Francia (as evident in both Lucha hasta el alba and El sonámbulo) is in fact mirrored in the novel. Here we are told that the dictator has left his mark branded into his subjects, including the Compiler, as if by a 'terrible writing':

> "...qué partícula de pensamiento; qué resto de gente viva o muerta quedará en el país que no lleve en adelante mi marca. La marca al rojo de YO-ÉL. Enteros. Inextinguibles. Postergados en la nada diferida de la raza a quien el destino ha brindado el sufrimiento como diversión, la vida no-vivida como vida, la irrealidad como realidad. Nuestra marca quedará en ella."(278)

Thus El Supremo and the Compiler (Francia and Roa Bastos?)

confront or 'look' at each other across the text and across 207 years of Paraguayan history. The novel suggests that the figure of the dictator has been inscribed into the history of the nation and its subjects, the past violently marking the present. We have already seen the form adopted by this inscription in the family scene, and our interpretation has, indeed, been confirmed by Roa Bastos in the same interview in which he describes his work on the palimpsest:

> "El Doctor Francia fue asumiendo cada vez más en la historia del pueblo paraguayo (la historia vivida más que escrita) una imagen mítica más que real; se fue convirtiendo en una figura temida, respetada, magnificada. Por otra parte, en la mayor parte de las casas de la pequeña burguesía paraguaya, su figura fue muy maltratada. En mi casa, era un personaje nefasto, era el 'cuco'."[38]

Now, I shall turn to other social sites through which the past, and the figure of Francia, are reproduced so as to mark the present in Paraguay. In doing so I hope to show how 'la historia vivida' ('Geschichte') and 'la historia escrita' ('Historie') meet.

CHAPTER FIVE
A RHETORICAL THEATRE.

> "Tengo una carta muy conmovedora, que para mí es realmente un testimonio que ha justificado, por lo menos, que me ha hecho sentir que había valido la pena, escribir Yo el Supremo. Me escribió un grupo de jóvenes paraguayos que estaba preso en el penal de Arecutacua, un viejo castillo de la época de la Colonia un poco al norte de Asunción. Me cuentan que habían leído, que habían discutido Yo el Supremo. Me dicen: 'Ahora sabemos que tenemos detrás a un país'. Bueno, esto puede interpretarse de diversas maneras. Evidentemente no han descubierto a su país a través del Supremo. El Supremo simplemente ha actuado como un ácido, un revulsivo y ha producido una toma de conciencia en gente no habituada a la ficción."[39]

Yo el Supremo is framed by two texts which are a fundamental part of its imaginary configuration. Apart from marking it off from the 'world of signs' in general, they also turn in on the text giving it a series of meanings which are fundamental to its specific fictional world. In doing so they also give it a certain intentionality as a signifying practice.[40] In other words, they contextualise its discourse in very particular ways. These texts are: the 'pasquín' which inaugurates the work, and the appendix which brings it -almost- to an end. Their importance lies in the projects they announce. Both the 'pasquín' and the appendix threaten the memory of the dictator in opposing ways. Between them lies the text which, I will suggest, works against them both. Together, they make up the novel. The 'pasquín' anounces:

> "Yo el Supremo Dictador de la República.
> Ordeno que al acaecer mi muerte mi cadáver sea

> decapitado; la cabeza puesta en una pica por tres días en la Plaza de la República donde se convocará al pueblo al son de las campañas echadas a vuelo. Todos mis servidores civiles y militares sufrirán pena de horca. Sus cadáveres serán enterrados en potreros de extramuros sin cruz ni marca que memore sus nombres.
> Al término del dicho plazo, mando que mis restos sean quemados y las cenizas arrojadas al río...(7)

The threat announced here is quite clear: to <u>eradicate</u> all memory-traces not only of the dictator but of the state apparatus he heads as well (that is, the 'servidores civiles y militares' he addresses his 'Circular perpetua' to). His national project is to be stopped and replaced. In contrast, the threat outlined by the Compiler in the appendix is quite different. There we are informed of the following:

> "El 31 de enero de 1961, una circular oficial convocó a los historiadores nacionales a un cónclave con el fin de 'iniciar las gestiones tendientes a recuperar los restos mortales del Supremo Dictador y restituir al patrimonio nacional esas sagradas reliquias'. La convocatoria se hizo extensiva a la cuidadanía exhortándola a colaborar en la patriótica Cruzada de reconquistar tanto el sepulcro del Fundador de la República como sus restos, desaparecidos, aventados por anónimos profanadores, los enemigos del Perpetuo Dictador."(457)

Rather than the eradication of memories, here we are dealing with the sacred recuperation and <u>monumentalisation</u> of the figure of Francia, the 'Supremo Dictador' -an attempt to recover, reconquer and reconstruct the site of his tomb - it is, in effect, an answer to the 'pasqín'. The meaning of this project is quite clear: to trace the continuity of the dictator's rule from the past into the present, and beyond. In other words, to give his figure and the authority it represents life beyond death -a kind of inmortality- in the

national imaginary it also 'founds'. And further -in a strategy similar to that employed by Roa Bastos himself in his early poem "No llores patria..."- to legitimise the political present and future in his name (which, in its very fetishism, involves a process of 'forgetting' too).

In responding to these two threats, it is suggested in the novel that the location from which the dictator enunciates his discourse is precisely that death which both threats need: his voice is a voice from the grave remembering and re-presenting his figure and history, and criticising its appropriation by others; his dialogues, dialogues of the dead. As El Supremo relates the gradual disappearance of his own remains he remarks on the appearance of the *Tenebrio Obscurus* which, he says "dicta el decreto de la disolución completa":

> "El *Tenebrio Obscurus* tiene la mágica cualidad de ser ubicuo e invisible. Aparece y desaparece. Se halla en varias partes al mismo tiempo. Sus ojos de millones de facetas me miran pero yo no los veo. Devoran mi imagen, mas ya no distingo la suya envuelta en la negra capa de foro carmesí..."(453)

The different facets that make up the Tenebrio Obscurus' eyes thus eat up what they see -the remains of El Supremo's rotting corpse- consuming his image from a multiplicity of different points of view (including, as we have seen, the Compiler's). With his death, mythification begins ("envuelta en la negra negra capa de foro carmesí"): the reconstruction of a hybrid figure representing the many faces of an authoritarian structure of control, the Chimera.[41]

The time of en/unciation is, therefore, radically indeterminate, or rather, the perpetual present of death, empty of all specific temporal determinations except for those activated by reading him (the Compiler being the first and most privileged). This device, of course, ensures Yo el Supremo's, or rather El Supremo's, meaningfulness for contemporary readers -such as the group of imprisoned 'jóvenes' referred to by Roa Bastos above- for he seems to speak to them in their present, and is complicit in giving the dictator's figure an inmortality beyond the 'pasquín'. On the other hand, the memories that are produced run against the grain of the project announced in the appendix and, in the mere act of being en-unciated, against the 'pasquín' too.[42] It is this conflict that perhaps enables the 'toma de conciencia' by the imprisoned students Roa Bastos mentions: El Supremo, like the Compiler/author, also burns away (with acid) at that composite myth that makes up the palimpsest -their reading, in Roa Bastos's image of it, thus mirrors his own. The image of El Supremo that Roa Bastos uncovers and reconstructs in Yo el Supremo is thus able to speak to the students in their own present in Paraguay -one politically dominated by the figure of another dictator, Geneal Alfredo Stroessner.

The Compiler goes on to tell of the reactions to this 'patriotic Crusade' and in doing so maps out a whole social and political spectrum of subjects marked by El Supremo/ Francia:

> "Los ecos de la convocatoria llegan a los más apartados confines del país. Al igual que en otros momentos cruciales de la vida nacional (the War of the Triple Alliance and the Chaco War, one assumes- J.K.) la ciudadanía toda se pone de pie como un solo hombre y responde a una sola voz. La única disonancia en esta afirmación plebiscitaria es ¡oh sorpresa! la de los especialistas, cronistas y folletinistas de la historia paraguaya. Una repentina e inesperada incertidumbre parece ensombrecer la conciencia historiográfica nacional acerca de cual puede ser el único y auténtico cráneo del *El Supremo*. Las opiniones se dividen; los historiadores se contradicen, discuten, disputan ardorosamente, vocingleramente. Es que -como cumpliéndose otra de las predicciones de *El Supremo*- esta iniciativa de unión nacional se convierte en terreno donde apunta el brote de una diminuta guerra civil, afortunadamente incruenta, puesto que se trata sólo de un enfrentamiento 'papelario'.(457)

As an interface between the inside and outside of the work, the Compiler's commentary on the 'circular oficial' in the appendix marks a point of entry of the literary into the political, the point, so to speak, where the novel itself seems to look out on the world and constitute its particular sociality. For what the Compiler has done here is to trace a diagram of the social in Paraguay whose subjects are differentiated in terms of the position they adopt with regard to the political as represented by the dead but mythical two-faced Francia/El Supremo: the 'fundador de la República'. And, it is the *nation* -"esta iniciativa de union nacional", says the Compiler- that is at stake. Indeed, all the subjects mentioned in these passages from the appendix are defined in relation to the figure of Francia and, metonymically, with the nation as the intersubjective cultural space he -as its founding principle- defines.[43] Firstly, there is the Paraguayan state in 1961, which publicises the 'circular oficial'

demanding the dictator's monumentalisation; secondly, as suggested by the Compiler, the unified and positive response of the 'pueblo' to this initiative; and, finally, historians are identified as the only dissonant note in what the Compiler calls this "momento(s) crucial de la vida nacional". These subjects -the state, the 'people' and 'history'- are also, as we shall see, particular social sites for the reproduction of Francia's image and names.

The function of the figure of Francia presented here is important for it suggests the kind of intertwining of culture (nationhood) and politics (relations of power) reminiscent of Antonio Gramsci's concept of <u>hegemony</u>. In Gramsci's coinage the concept is a development in, and a concretisation of, marxist theories of ideology. Moving beyond the more traditional ideas of 'false conciousness' and the expression of class 'interests', however, it refers to the <u>cultural</u> processes of political alliance and subject construction in the contexts of ruling class formation, legitimation and social reproduction. The concept of hegemony thus attempts to account for the processes involved in the creation of a collective subject/will that 'actively' consents to the political, moral and intellectual leadership of a ruling class. For Gramsci, therefore, bourgeois state rule can not be realistically thought in terms of a state that is merely conceived as coercive. The fabrication of consent -hegemony- through such institutions of civil society as schools and the family had to be taken into

account too (hence the importance of moral and intellectual leadership in Gramsci's conception). His analysis was more concrete, on the other hand, because the idea of successful hegemony cuts across the more abstract base/superstructure model underpinning traditional conceptions of class rule and interests. For what emerges from these processes is not just bourgeois rule as such, but the constitution of an interclass 'historic bloc' le d by the bourgeoise -or even more concretely, by a bourgeois class fraction. Gramsci was thus addressing a major, but undeveloped, Marxist idea: how the particular interests of a ruling class became general interests at the level of the state -that is, how the needs and desires of the bourgeoise are represented as the needs and desires of society as a whole. How, in other words, they became 'popular'.[44]

It is into this kind of complex cultural and political terrain that the sociality described in the appendix looks. 'El Supremo Dictador' is, in this sense, a many-faced authority structure -representing different needs, desires and, as we have seen, fears- and an important sign in modern Paraguay's shifting hegemonic text. Simultaneously affirmed and denied (for example, in Roa Bastos' petty bourgeois family and in the 'pasquín'), he nevertheless remains a central principle of national unification, a historical figure from the past around which the state -in 1961- and the people may be aligned in a national-populist political formation, that is a 'historic bloc' dominated by

the rural oligarchy. According to the Compiler, in the appendix to Yo el Supremo, his evocation is enough to move the 'people' and put the question of the national on the political and cultural agenda. It is, arguably, this history -of Francia's mythologisation and dissemination throughout Paraguayan society as a figure of hegemony, rather than the admittedly important fact of his dictatorship in the immediate post-independence period (the text's referent)- that is the real historical object of Roa Bastos' novel. It also, I think, goes some way in explaining the mechanisms by which the past (Francia) has been constantly written into the present as both the symbol of authority and the nation. I have touched upon two sites of such reproduction: the family and the school. I will now turn to two others mentioned by the Compiler in his appendix to the novel: the government of Paraguay (in 1961 and after) and the 'conciencia historiográfica nacional'. I will return to the last social site -the 'pueblo'- in Part Three. Each site may equally be imagined as a layer in that Paraguayan palimpsest which bears Francia's name(s). I will begin with the 'conciencia historiográfica nacional'.

(i) Julio César (Chaves) and 'el Supremo Dictador'.

We have already noted -with reference to the work of Bartolomé Mitre- the kind of parodic dialogue set up by the novel with regard to the historiographical material it uses. Indeed, it is worth postulating here that the fundamental *fictional gesture of the text* is to have

invented a voice, El Supremo's, which addresses other previous works that have represented Dr. Francia, particularly works of historiography. El Supremo calls them "Historias de entretén-y-miento" (65). For this reason, the 'pasquín' which opens Yo el Supremo unleashes not only the dictator's own history (the 'circular perpetua'), but also, paradoxically, an attack on historical narratives -and indeed on representation and writing as such: "Ninguna historia puede ser contada. Ninguna historia que valga la pena ser contada. Más el verdadero lenguaje no nació todavía."(15)-, especially those which have taken 'el supremo dictador' as their object: "Soy una figura indispensable para la maladicencia" (8), he says. In this sense, it is worth pointing out that El Supremo enacts- albeit to extremes- certain views made public by Roa Bastos on existing historical -and other- interpretations of Paraguay:

> "...la dificultad de una 'lectura' correcta de la realidad paraguaya se ve agravada por la enorme confusión que han producido las antojadizas interpretaciones de sociólogos e historiadores nacionales y extranjeros que han hecho de la 'culturología' paraguaya una actividad que pareciera atacada de sonambulismo o de delirio."[45]

What surely can be derived from El Supremo's discourse is that in his view this has especially been the case with regard to Dr. Francia -hence Roa Bastos' idea of working against the grain of that palimpsest made up from such representations: what I referred to above as the making (El Supremo) and the re-making (the Compiler) of history, and what the author has called 'counter-history'.[46]

Several commentators on Yo el Supremo have pointed out that the single most important work of historiography for the composition of the text is the already mentioned biography of Dr. Francia by Julio César Chaves, El Supremo Dictador. This attention for the most part has, however, like most articles written about Yo el Supremo, been rigorously formalistic. In one of the most recent and interesting in this respect, Daniel Balderston has foregrounded the importance of Chaves' work for Roa Bastos' by tracking down quotations from the former in the latter and comparing them as instances of the novel's intertextuality. Some, he notes, are explicitly signalled as quotations (these are usually to be found in the footnotes), whilst others are embedded without acknowledgement into El Supremo's discourse; some are accurately reproduced, whilst others are completely rearranged and/or fictionally transformed by the novelist- by, for example, adding details from other sources. At other times, as we saw in the case of Mitre in Chapter Two, Roa Bastos quotes from works used or even quoted by Chaves himself.[47] It is in this way, suggests Balderston, that Roa Bastos re-works the historical record. His conclusions are the following:

> "The reiterated references to Chaves may seem to imply that his book contributed actively to the elaboration of Roa's novel. Indeed it does, but in a negative sense. For, while Chaves exhibits a confidence that his subject is knowable, Roa here as in most of his other writing expresses a profound disbelief in the adequacy of language in general, and of narrative history in particular, for the representation of reality...The historical materials on Doctor Francia change sign, form and shape on

> passing from one literary system (Chaves' narrative history) to another (Roa's metahistorical novel), yet Roa's scepticism as to whether the subject of history is knowable results not in indifference but in greater urgency: "Escribir no significa convertir lo real en palabras sino hacer que la palabra sea real" (67)...What matters about Roa's radical rereading of Chaves is not only the 'prior textualization' to which Doctor Francia is subject, but also this urgent -and impossible- appeal to a reality beyond the text."[48]

Balderston also includes two footnotes to these conclusions which refer the reader to Gerald Martin's recent book Journeys through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century. He suggests that it contains a political reading of the novel relevant to the epistemological questions thrown up by his own and, therefore, quotes the following passage from Martin's book: "Roa fully recognizes the 'ambiguity' of reality -his novel is almost Althusserian in its epistemological intentionality- but insists that the difficulty of interpreting the nature-society dialectic of human history in no way justifies ambiguities in the relation between the writer and the people or between the the writer and the reader. These are quite separate problems."[49] This is where Balderston's article ends.

The conclusions set out here are, in fact, complex, even intractable, problems which it would be impossible to completely unravel here. They are, furthermore, as Balderston argues, issues that constantly emerge in El Supremo's critique of historiography -the writing of history. I do think, however, that the kind of problematic

I have developed above with regard to the importance of the present for history, the social field mapped out by the Compiler, and to the concept of hegemony, go some way in providing a direction for <u>possible</u> solutions: it is a question, perhaps, of finding relevant and concrete <u>mediations</u> between such opposing (real) abstractions as 'text' (or 'representation') and 'reality', or 'writer' and 'people' (or 'reader'). For there is a sense in which none of these categories are in any way 'real' or even meaningful without the other: reality, in other words, is only real when it is textualised, and text, only text, when realised. For example, although the above mentioned Paraguayan family (is it Roa Bastos'?) is a reality beyond the figure of Francia, it is only <u>this</u> family in their mutual determination (more generally: the family has many conditions of existence, one of these is the law). With regard to <u>Yo el Supremo</u>, as I suggested, it is thus a matter of finding out how 'text' (the figure of Francia) becomes 'real' (with a violence, in the above family, which may partly explain Roa Bastos' own vehement relationship to the 'palimpsest') and vice-versa -where, that is, 'la historia escrita' meets 'la historia vivida': who reads and writes 'el supremo dictador', and why? In this sense, 'la palabra' would always already be 'real'... especially, as we shall see below, when it has the power of the state or a dictator behind it! For this reason, any appeal to a reality beyond the text, insofar as <u>Yo el Supremo</u> is concerned, takes us to the <u>mediating</u> social and political field mapped out by the

Compiler in the appendix (the government in 1961, the 'pueblo', and national historiography), a field which is unthinkable, moreover, without its own 'prior textualizations' of the figure of Francia as a multi-faceted authority structure. Thus, the cultural contents of the concept of hegemony allow us to (1) think Chaves' text about Francia within the reality of the 'conciencia historiográfica nacional', and (2) Yo el Supremo's relation to Chaves' historical biography (text) as so mediated. For this reason, it is not just a question of taking the ambiguities of the 'nature-society dialectic of human history' -the ground of a marxist philosophy of history- into account, but also those mediations constitutive of the dialectics of society and culture in and through which the former becomes both opaque (ideology) and significant -the ground of a materialist history of philosophy/culture.

There is a sense in which the above remarks may bracket off the philosophical dimension of Chaves' 'confidence that his subect is knowable'. But perhaps we should just follow the dictator's advice here: "¿No sabe usted aún que la verdad no existe y que la mentira y la calumnia no se borran jamás? Pero dejemos estas vanas filosofías."(339) On the other hand, insofar as El Supremo Dictador is a biography, El Supremo himself does pose the philosophical problem quite starkly. In conversation with Patiño, he says:

> "¿No crees que de mí se podría hacer una historia fabulosa? ¡Absolutamente seguro, Excelencia! ¡La más fabulosa, la más cierta, la más digna del altor majestivo de su persona! No, Patiño, no. Del Poder

> Absoluto no pueden hacerse historias. Si se pudiera, El Supremo estaría demás... Si a toda costa se quiere hablar de alguien no sólo tiene uno que ponerse en su lugar: Tiene que *ser* ese alguien. Unicamente el semejante puede escribir sobre le semejante. Unicamente los muertos podrían escribir sobre los muertos."(35)

He then goes on to ask his secretary whether he thinks he could write such a history. El Supremo does not expect an answer, at least from Patiño:

> "¿Eh, eh, compilador de embustes y falsificaciones? Recogedor de humo, tú que en el fondo odias al Amo. ¡Contesta! ¿Eh, eh? ¡Ah! ¡Vamos! Aun suponiendo a tu favor que me engañas para preservarme, lo que haces es quitarme pelo a pelo el poder de nacer y morir por mí mismo. Impedir que yo sea mi propio comentario."(35)

To write the history of Absolute Power is impossible because it is too abstract an idea, and unrepeatable. Furthermore, the writer would need to possess 'absolute power', and embody it, to do so. This dilemma is then reproduced at a more modest hermeneutic level: the writer needs 'sympathetic understanding' for his/her object. But then this idea is also taken to its concrete extremes: to do so they too, in fact, need to be that person. Thus only the dead Supremo can write about the dead Dr. Francia. Hence the dictator's protest against the Compiler who, as we have seen, both makes this fiction (of El Supremo writing his own 'comentario') possible and, by constantly intervening, impossible.

Later, however, El Supremo makes the following contradictory comment: "Quien pretende relatar su vida se pierde en lo inmediato. Unicamente se puede hablar de

otro."(65) If, at first, the dilemmas of extreme identification are parodied, here the necessity of 'otherness' is foregrounded: now, El Supremo's posited autobiography becomes problematic. In Chapter Eight below I shall look at how the Compiler addresses these problems. Here I shall briefly return to Chaves. What strategies does he use to delimit his object in El Supremo Dictador, and how are they related to Paraguayan historiography?

In the prefaces to the first and second editions of his work, Chaves makes clear his pretensions to a scientific approach to history writing, and in doing so suggests that his biography of Dr. Francia signals a break with the tradition of Paraguayan historiography up until then. El Supremo Dictador, he says, " vivirá porque representa un gran esfuerzo para superar la antigualla de francismo o antifrancismo, de lopizmo o antilopizmo, es decir, la historia con anteojeras."[30] In other words, it marks the moment in which history writing became autonomous from politics. As I mentioned with regard to the reception of Barrett's work in turn-of-the-century Paraguay above, many writers -like Manuel Domínguez- were concerned with reconstructing a heroic tradition for a nation devastated by the War of the Triple Aliance. Between 1900 and the 1930's, this was the case with the emerging discipline of historiography too. Here, however, there was also a new Liberal proyect in historiography to confront which, particularly in the work of Cecilio Báez, used the

historical essay to mount an attack on the Paraguayan political tradition of dictatorship -that is, Dr. Francia and the Lópezes- put an end to, he hoped, by the war. On the other hand, for romantic nationalist writers like Juan O'Leary -increasingly associated with the Colorado Party- Báez's work represented a continuation of the war -an attack on 'la Patria' which Francisco Solano López, especially, represented- by other means. Historiography in Paraguay was thus constituted as a polemic over the dictators of the past and articulated to the politics of post-war reconstruction (and institutionally, to the Colorado and Liberal parties).[51] It is in relation to this polemic and tradition that Chaves' work constitutes an apparent break. His conclusion, therefore, is that Paraguayan history still had to be written: "Nuestra historia es todavía un yacimiento inexplotado".[52]

Chaves' desire to escape the grip of the political is condensed in his 'will to science':

> "Quiero fijar claramente mi criterio: el historiador no es un juez de raya que debía establecer, inflexiblemente, quién llegó primero y quién segundo; quién fue malo y quién bueno; quién acertó y quién erró. Apenas quiera asumir esta postura, su posición veráse seriamente amenazada. Al establecer conclusiones, habrá fijado una tésis; sentada la misma, tendrá que defenderla, y entonces estará ya en el campo de la política, donde no existe ni puede existir historia científica. En El Supremo Dictador hay una definición, la más grande, la más concluyente de las definiciones: la que surge de los hechos, de los acontecimientos."[53]

Thus, in Chaves's view, it is science that provides the historian with epistemological certainty, a location for his

practice which is cleansed of political ideolgies- 'francismo o antifrancismo'. Furthermore, he observes, it allows the 'facts' and 'events' to speak for (define) themselves. Such a conception of history constitutes, as we have seen, an example of what Andreu called "(el) discurso histórico al uso" ("tal como se practica...en obras como...El Supremo Dictador..."), and what LaCapra presented as the positivist 'documentary model' of historiography. Both, I noted, produce a past completely divorced from the present -the past as 'otro' or 'yacimiento' (in this case Dr. Francia)- but which, at the same time, is self-evident.

But from where does Chaves derive his facts? The answer, of course, is from a series of primary texts (the 'archive') that bear witness to Dr. Francia's activities during his reign. Now, it should be underlined that for this very reason Chaves' El Supremo Dictador is an important book -and not only for Yo el Supremo- because it was the first work of systematic historiography to collect these primary sources into one text and put them to use in the production of an historical narrative. This, moreover, is what gives it more than just negative value for Roa Bastos' novel. There is, for example, an aspect of El Supremo Dictador's structure that is reproduced in Yo el Supremo (beyond, that is, mere quotation and commentary). In both works the political life of the dictator is truncated: the reader is presented with biographical information about the dictator's childhood and education, his activity as a lawyer

and even his private (sexual) life as a young man, his political activities during the last years of the colony and during the independence process, his election to office and the subsequent consolidation of his dictatorial regime until approximately 1820 and the conspiracy against Francia. This takes the reader to Chapter 16 of Chaves' book (he deals with the conspiracy in Chapter 20). His last Chapter -31- deals with Francia's death, but in between, the logic of the work shifts from being a quite coherent chronological narrative to being episodic and thematic, dealing with such matters as the relationship between Francia and Rosas, the Church and State, the case of the naturalist Bonpland...etc. Although Yo el Supremo is not a chronological narrative in any conventional sense, it is nevertheless organised around a discourse narrating El Supremo's rise to power (the 'circular perpetua') and a series of episodes interrupting this story representing other aspects of El Supremo's life or concerns (in some of which he 'confronts' those 'witnesses' whose texts constitute Chaves' primary sources), and ends with his death. The gap in chronology -roughly between 1820 and 1840- is unimportant in Roa Bastos' novel insofar as the production of scientific knowledge about the past or a biography of Francia is concerned -as I have pointed out, this is not its historical object. It is important, however, for Chaves' biography, because as it stands it remains relatively incomplete -and this is the case for most works of historiography on Francia since (for which, it should be added, El Supemo Dictador is the

classical text): none of them throw any light on how Francia remained in power for so long, nor on the political structures through which such power may have been maintained. The point here is that the kind and extent of the knowledge available about Dr. Francia's regime and, in this case, the gaps in it, does mark -how could it be otherwise?- Roa Bastos' own novel. This is because it too works with those materials at its disposal -most importantly, Chaves' historical biography. In this sense, El Supremo Dictador is not just the passive object of Roa Bastos' parodic 'metahistorical' gaze, but itself a layer in that reverberating palimpsest with its own, however modest, determining effects on the composition of Yo el Supremo.

El Supremo Dictador is also important because it provides Roa Bastos with the materials he needed to produce his own fictional world -a 'cast of charcters', so to speak- and, paradoxically, as Balderston suggests, to simultaneously 're-write the historical record'. It is clear, from the above passage, however, and substantiated in the text, that Chaves' confidence in the 'hechos' and 'acontecimientos' speaking for themselves is naive. This is because they are already 'textualised' in the archive. Some of the most important personal accounts used by Chaves are books written by travellers to post-independence Paraguay, particularly those by the Scottish merchants J.P. and W.P Robertson and the Swiss doctors J.R. Rengger and M.F. Longchamp after they had all been expelled form the country

by Francia. Chaves' confidence in the 'facts' as represented in these works is, nevertheless, almost total.[54] Here is an example of his use of Rengger and Longchamp's The Reign of Doctor Joseph Gaspard Roderick De Francia in Paraquay:

> "Según todos sus biógrafos poseía un caracter extraño y variable. Era raro, lunático, misántropo. Ramos Mejía le dio lugar en Las Neurosis de los Hombres en la Historia Argentina. Sufría constantes accesos de neurastenia. Parece que mucho contaba en esos ataques el estado atmosférico. Dice Rengger: 'La temperatura influye mucho en su complexión: se observa al menos que cuando empieza a reinar el viento NE son frecuente sus accesos. Este viento muy húmedo y de un calor sofocante, ocasiona mucha lluvia, y hace una impresión molesta en las personas nerviosas, o en aquellas que padecen obstrucciones del hígado o de las otras vísceras del bajo vientre. Por el contrario, con el viento S.O. que es seco y fresco, el Dictador está de ordinario alegre; entonces canta, se ríe solo, y conversa de buena gana con cuanta persona se le acerca."...Es tradición que las medidas más terribles durante el proceso de la conjuración (he is referring to the 1820 conspiracy -J.K.), fueron tomadas bajo la acción del viento norte; él soplaba y se reanudaban las torturas y los fusilamientos, que fueron suspendidos al correr el sedante viento sur. Vivió siempre solo, dominado por su única y obsesionante pasión: el mando."[55]

Any hope that Chaves's 'scientific' approach may have let the facts (here Dr. Francia, the object of his biography) 'define themselves', or in any way dispel the 'sonambulismo' or 'delirio' of Paraguayan historiography, are dashed by this unquestioned reliance on one of the most important primary sources on Dr. Francia. The paragraph before the one quoted by Chaves in Rengger and Longchamp's book completes the picture:

> "When the Dictator is attacked by an access of hypochondria, he either shuts himself up for several days, and leaves off public business altogether, or vents his ill humour on those around him. Civil

> functionaries, officers, soldiers -all are equally ill treated by him. It is during these paroxysms particularly, that he is most prone to order arrests, and to inflict the severest punishments. At such periods, he thinks nothing of issuing a sentence of death."[54]

Now, here is Roa Bastos' gloss of these passages in Yo el Supremo. In his 'Cuaderno Privado', El Supremo remembers "don Juan Rengo" and addresses his book:

> "Estamparon en ese libélulo que la temperatura tiene mucha influencia sobre mi humor. Cuando empieza a soplar el viento norte, leo, sus accesos se vuelven mucho más frecuentes. Este viento muy húmedo y de un calor sofocante afecta a los que tienen una exesiva sensibilidad o sufren de obstrucción del hígado o de los intestinos del bajo vientre. Cuando este viento sopla sin pausa, en ocasiones por muchos días consecutivos, a la hora de la siesta en los pueblos y en los campos reina un silencio más profundo aun que el de la medianoche. Los animales buscan la sombra de los árboles, la frescura de los manantiales. Los pájaros se esconden en el follaje; se los ve ahuecar las alas y erizar las plumas. Hasta los insectos buscan abrigo entre las hojas. El hombre se vuelve torpe. Pierde el apetito. Transpira aún estando quieto y la piel se le vuelve seca y apergaminada. Añádanse a esto dolores de cabeza y, en tratándose de personas nerviosas, sobrevienen afecciones hipocondríacas. Poseído por ellas, El Supremo se encierra por días enteros sin comunicación ni alimentación alguna, o desahoga su ira con los que le vienen a tiro, sean empleados civiles, oficiales o soldados. Entonces vomita injurias y amenazas contra sus enemigos reales o imaginarios. Ordena arrestos. Inflige crueles castigos. En momentos tan borrascosos sería para él una bagatela el pronunciar una sentencia de muerte. ¡Ah helvéticos bachilleres! ¡Cuánta maligna bufonería! Primero me atribuyen excesiva sensibilidad. Luego perversidad extrema que hace del viento norte mi instigador y cómplice. Por último, faltan a la ética de su profesión divulgando mis enfermedades. ¿Me vieron ustedes fulminar sentencias de muerte en tal estado, infligir crueles castigos, como dicen? Por mentirosos, falsarios y cínicos, ustedes debieron ser ajusticiados. Harto lo merecían. Recibieron en cambio trato amable y bondadoso, aun bajo los peores bochornos del viento norte. Lo mismo bajo el seco y agradable viento del sur que es cuando, según ustedes, canto, bailo, río solo y charlo sin parar con mis fantasmas particulares en un idioma que no es de este

mundo."(127)

It is clear that Roa Bastos has not just read the secondary source -Chaves' biography- to compose Yo el Supremo, but the primary sources as well. In the above passage there are ideas and phrases from both. When he addresses Juan Rengo, El Supremo implies -by using the word 'leo'- that he is quoting directly from the book written by the Swiss doctors. In doing so, however, he -as Balderston points out with reference to other examples- re-writes the historical record by putting extra words in to its authors' mouths, exaggerating the effects of the North wind on the dictator's disposition-and the latter on the flora and fauna of Paraguay- to such an extent that the doctors' account loses all verisimilitude (and becomes, in a conventional sense, fiction). The Compiler operates in a similar fashion. For example, quoting from John Parish Robertson's description of his first meeting with Dr. Francia, he inserts the following fantastic passages into the text he is 'quoting' and thereby endows the dictator with magical powers:

> "Quise levantar una de estas sìllas; pero a pesar de todo mi esfuerzo no logré moverlas un milímetro. Vino entonces en mi ayuda el Dictador y con su afable sonrisa hizo levitar la pesada curul con un leve gesto de la mano. Luego la hizo descender en el lugar preciso que mi pensamiento había elegido sin palabras."(147-148)[57]

In Yo el Supremo there is not a direct questioning of Chaves' work. It constitutes, rather, an indirect parody of the historian's trust in the 'facts' and 'events' speaking ('defining') for themselves: in Yo el Supremo that is

exactly what they do, as characters of the novel and as targets of both El Supremo and the Compiler's fantastic mis-quotations. In Roa Bastos' re-writing the sources for Chaves' history -which bare his 'facts' and 'events'- thus become fictional. From this perspective Yo el Supremo is 'meta-historical'. Not, however, simply because it transposes quoted and mis-quoted material from one genre to another (for this would mean that Chaves' biography was 'meta-historical' too), but because in doing so it parodies and plays fictional havoc with El Supremo Dictador's own 'infrastructure signifiante' -its *textual conditions of possibility*- made up from such works as the Robertson Brothers' Four Years in Paraguay.

But what is El Supremo Dictador's relationship to Paraguayan historiography, to what the Compiler calls 'la conciencia historiográfica nacional'? As we have seen, the main reason for Chaves' trust in science is that it places him beyond the politics of history writing in the country, particularly important for his book because of its subject matter: dictatorship before the War of the Triple Alliance. His historical biography would thus seem to strike a 'dissonant' note within Paraguayan historiography. If there is to be any judgement of Dr. Francia, he states, it would be imposed by the facts themselves and not by the author. We have seen how Yo el Supremo deals with this idea. El Supemo Dictador, however, is not just a narrative of facts and events, it is also a biography; its object, the life of

a dictator who, given the genre chosen by Chaves, must be endowed with a unified subjectivity, that is, with particular desires and needs. In his commentary on Rengger's description of Francia's 'moods' Chaves provides just such a psychological (or even pathological) 'need' to give his biographical narrative the illusion of unity: "su única y obsesionante pasión: el mando." Francia, says Chaves, was "...poseído por la sed de mando...No tuvo sino un amor: el poder. No tuvo sino una pasión: la del mando. Buscó el poder por el poder mismo, no por la vanidad, satisfacción o ventaja que de su ejercicio derivan."[58] Already, as a young student in Córdoba, he was "altivo", "rebelde", "dominante", "audaz", "voluntarioso", "intrépido" and "valiente". His classmates called him "el Dictador".[59] El Supremo Dictador thus reconstitutes a teleological narrative from its sources so that Francia is represented as always having been, or wanting to be, what he becomes, a dictator moved by a lust for power. In this sense, the biography's political denouement is already present at its beginning and embodied in Francia's character which, unproblematically and without ruptures, governs his life-story. It is what moves him.[60]

In El Supremo Dictador what starts in its prefaces as an understandable desire to escape from the particular polemic constitutive of Paraguayan historiography, becomes in the text, firstly, a denial of popular politics and then, paradoxically, a particular reformulation of the 'anti-

francista' argument. In other words, the politics of history-writing in Paraguay returns to mark the work. For fundamental to his psychological characterisation of Francia's political life -as demagogue- is a parallel disavowal -a recognition and rejection- on Chaves' part of his popularity. The respect held for Francia amongst the majority peasant population of Paraguay is a 'fact' Chaves cannot understand nor incorporate into his analysis. He concludes his book with the following statement:

> "Pasados algunos años, en la campaña la gente se resistía a mencionarlo. Un paraguayo nunca hablará voluntariamente de 'el muerto' como lo llaman ellos...En vida había sido El Supremo, después siempre se lo nombró El Finado. Los campesinos se descubrían o se ponían de pie al hacerlo."[61]

This is what Chaves cannot explain. It may be because in his view 'el pueblo' is a "...niño inocente que no profundiza ni analiza."[62] He does recognize, however, that Francia's political project was to "Llevar el centro de gravedad de la política de la capital a la campaña, de los comerciantes de la cuidad a los campesinos." He even complains that:

> "El derecho electoral sufre también una transformación radical: las asambleas anteriores habían sido de *vecinos*; la parte más sana de la población, como se decía, era convocada, quedando ausente la masa popular de las deliberaciones y resoluciones. En la nueva convocatoria se determinaba expresamente que los diputados debían ser electos en 'elecciones populares y libres que se efectúan en cada uno de dichos lugares, por todos o la mayor parte de sus repectivos habitantes'."

For Chaves, however, the effective political relationship between Francia and the peasantry is merely an effect of the latter's demagoguery:

> "Se ve una mano tejiendo en la sombra la urdidumbre de los acontecimientos, tratando de llevar el centro de gravedad de los congresos, de la aristocracia asunceña militar y civil, a la nutrida representación campesina. Y será ésta la que impondrá el gobierno absoluto años más tarde."[63]

This passage not only reveals what Chaves thinks about Francia, but his views of the Paraguayan peasantry too. Since he represents them as innocent and unenlightened children deprived of rationality, any analysis of their needs and desires is precluded, and their inclusion in his narrative as subjects of history denied -despite their importance as the social base of Francia's regime. Meanwhile, "...en vano una minoría alerta trató de oponerse a lo inevitable."[64] Arguably, therefore, one could read the reference to "una mano tejiendo en la sombra" in the above passage as in fact referring to Chaves' own weaving of the text of history and his interpretation of the dictatorship of Dr. Francia. Through the space constituted by his disavowal of the 'pueblo' (here, the Paraguayan peasantry who put Francia into power) an anti-francista politics of writing history re-enters El Supremo Dictador.

In its denial of a possible political relationship between Francia and the 'pueblo', and its substitution by the trope of 'a dictator's lust for power', El Supremo Dictador reinserts itself into that side of Paraguayan historiography that emerged after the War of the Triple Alliance as liberal anti-francismo. In this regard, it is not surprising that the idea for the 'pasquín' -and the threat of eradication it contains- that opens Yo el Supremo

should, in the appendix, emerge from an intervention in the 'paper war' by Julio César Chaves:

> "A mediados de 1841 se agitó el ambiente paraguayo abriéndose una encendida polémica sobre la vida y la obra de El Supremo. Circularon panfletos y pasquines, corrieron prosas y versos...Es conveniente recordar que poco tiempo después apareció una mañana en la puerta del templo un cartel que se decía enviado por él, desde el infierno..."(460)[65]

As we have seen, it is in response to such a threat that El Supremo 'dictates' -even though, it is hinted, he may have written it himself. I shall now turn to the other -less academic- side of 'la conciencia nacional historiográfica nacional', that articulated to the romantic nationalist Colorado tradition now in power, that is, to the <u>state</u> in 1961.

<u>(ii) Stroessner and Dr. Francia</u>.

By 1961 General Alfredo Stroessner had become the new dictator of Paraguay. He originally came to power in 1954 as a result of a coup d'etat -in the midst of the oligarchic crisis I described in Chapter One- and would remain until 1989 -long after Roa Bastos finished writing <u>Yo el Supremo</u>. The political situation he inherited has been neatly summarised by James Painter: "not only (i) the predominance of the Colorado party after their victory in the Civil War of 1947 over its traditional rivals, and (ii) an increasing conflict within the Colorado party between the oligarchic and anti-oligarchic elements, but also (iii) the continued political instability inimical to the United States and certain sectors of the oligarchy."[66] It was to the

consolidation of this new regime in line with the U.S. Cold War continental policy of National Security that Stroessner and his followers dedicated themselves throughout the late 1950's and early 1960's, eventually imposing a harsh and fairly sophisticated dictatorship that managed to shore up the state imposed after the War of the Triple Alliance and in crisis since the Chaco War.

The strongest opposition to Stroessner within the Colorado Party came from a Peronist influenced group led by Epifanio Méndez Fleitas. Having originally supported Stroessner's military coup against another faction of the Colorado Party, he then began to forge a power base of his own amongst populist officers in the army and in the trade union movement. Stroessner, however, was able to out-manouvre Fleitas -as was to be the case with all his opponents until he was eventually overthrown in 1989. He did so by violently crushing the trade union movement in 1958 during a General Strike called to protest against an International Monetary Fund stabilisation plan. When members of the Colorado Party protested at the use of party para-military forces in this violence, Stroessner responded by closing down Congress and sending 400 members of the party -including Fleitas- into exile. The destruction of his main rival within the Colorado Party and the last popular source of possible opposition at that time created the space and the opportunity for the new regime to radically restructure the Paraguayan political sphere in the

years to come in favour of the landed bourgeoisie. This essentially involved extending and deepening the transformations in the Colorado Party begun during the governments of Morínigo and Natalicio González: firstly, as a base of right-wing populist support and, secondly, in the ways it made itself present as a hegemonic force within civil society. The latter involved the extension of the influence of the party apparatus throuhgout the nation so that it existed even at village level; the stipulation that all state employees belong to the Party; the use of civilian spies for surveillance and the monitoring of all social activities;[67] the encouragement of an 'illegal' capitalism (e.g. smuggling); and the satisfaction of other short and medium term interests (e.g. cheap school utensils for the children of party members). In this way the apparatus of the Colorado Party invaded and took control of the apparatus of the state and at the same time became increasingly national, creating what has been called "un Estado omnivoro". At the apex of its triadic structure- constituted by the military, the Colorado Party and the executive- stood the dictator Stroessner.[68] It was by such means of insertion into civil society that the regime was able to organise the consent necessary to its rule.

Although Stroessner is unnamed in the text, by the time Roa Bastos' novel is published in 1974 he had been in power for twenty years. It is difficult when dealing with a regime like Stroessner's, however, to pinpoint the exact

moment when hegemonic rule predominated over rule by coercion since the latter was always present, but the early 1960's may mark such a period of transition. For it is important to underline that the kind of repression that took place between 1954 and 1960 was not the norm throughout Stroessner's regime. Coercion on a mass scale was rather -as one would expect- extremely violent but conjunctural and exemplary, and for most people in Paraguay mere survival and resistance to such changes was difficult enough, especially in a society whose opposition parties were to remain largely unreconstructed and divorced from the majority of the peasant population living in the country-side. As we have seen on the other hand, the Stroessner regime did ensure the reconstruction of the Colorado Party and also put considerable effort into forging links with the rural peasantry. In 1963, realising that it could not survive on the basis of repression alone, the state initiated an agrarian policy known as 'la segunda reconstrucción nacional'. The main function of this political initiative was the modernisation of agrarian capitalism in Paraguay and the extension of the agricultural frontier. This involved two main strategies: firstly, a process of land colonisation to solve the problem of pressure on the land from a poor peasantry and, secondly, an open-door to foreign investment in intensive agribusiness production. The policy of colonisation was not accompanied by agrarian reform and therefore left the structure of landownership untouched. It did, however, address real peasant needs. The Stroessner

government simultaneously created the Instituto de Bienestar Rural through which these needs could be channelled with the apparent intention of satisfying them, whilst incorporating many peasants themselves into the Colorado Party's extensive clientelist structures.[69] This, I think, is the context in which the government's 'circular oficial' in the appendix of Yo el Supremo should be read. Dated as being issued in 1961, it apparently marks a point in which the dictatorship of General Stroessner is shifting its mode of rule from one based almost exclusively on repression to another with hegemonic intent. It is a moment when the regime needs legitimation, and who better to grant this than the popular (at least among the peasantry) 'founder' of the nation-state, 'El Supremo Dictador'.

The regime's 'circular oficial', as reproduced in the novel, is connected to another ideological dimension of the government's agrarian initiative: its very name. Like the 'circular oficial', 'la segunda reconstrucción nacional' was, as its name suggests, national in scope. Whilst the former intends to recover the shattered remains of 'El Supremo Dictador' and unify the nation around one of its major signs (the dead dictator), the second intended to reconstruct a shattered country and make it a nation once again. In being 'second', it was, of course, related to a 'first': the 'primera reconstrucción nacional', set in motion after the devastation of the War of the Triple Alliance by the founder of the Colorado Party, Bernadino

Caballero. This linking of Stroessner with Bernadino Caballero functions to equate the period of oligarchic crisis that began in the 1930's -to which the 'segunda reconstrucción' was a belated response- with the invasion of Paraguay by the forces of the Triple Alliance -to which the 'primera reconstrucción' responded- and to imply that the Liberals, in power during the 1930's and who fought against the dictatorship of Solano López, are to blame (now with the Communists) for all of society's evils (in this way all internal threats to the 'nation' -that is, the National Security state- are converted into threats emmanating from 'outside', e.g. International Communism). Stroessner and the Colorado Party Caballero created will, on the other hand, as the 'reconstrucción nacional' and the 'circular oficial' suggest, put the nation back together again.

It is at this point that the Stroessner regime's administrative and economic policies become articulated to a cultural politics, for the elements of a nationalist historical narrative legitimising Stroessner's National Security state are now in place. The narrative traces a lineage of authoritarian rulers to whom Stroessner is son and heir. It begins with Dr. Francia ('el fundador de la nación'), continues with Carlos Antonio López ('el modernizador') and Francisco Solano López ('el defensor de la patria') -all dictators before the devastation of the War of the Triple Alliance-, Bernadino Caballero (the founder of the Colorado Party), and ends, finally, with General Alfredo

Stroessner himself. This narrative of the nation linking Francia to Stroessner was disseminated throughout Paraguayan society in a wide variety of forms. It is present in many of Stroessner's offical speeches (for example, on taking the presidency he says to the House of Representatives: "Como cuidadano, como soldado y como Gobernante, expreso ante la Nación Paraguaya por Vuestro Honorable conducto, que me hago cargo con vosotros ante la historia de la consigna que recibimos de Francia, de los López y el General Bernadino Caballero."[70]), in Luis María Argaña's official Historia de las ideas políticas en el Paraguay (1979) and in the biography of Francia, El Supremo, by Emilio Saguier Aceval (which contains the following dedication: "A ALFREDO STROESSNER,/el brillante conductor/del Nuevo Paraguay./Con la paz inspiró este libro."[71]). With the power of the state behind it, this version of Paraguayan history circulated throughout civil society and was even present on the covers of school-children's copy books: against a red ('colorado') background, branches tied together with a bow of national colours -signifying the unity of the nation- frame a picture of Stroessner (smiling at the future generation) surrounded by the smaller portraits of Francia, López father and son, Caballero, and the 'héroe of the Chaco War', General Estigarribia. Below the illustration a scroll reads: "Solo los pueblos que aman su pasado pueden proyectarse hacia el porvenir engrandeciendo el presente. Stroessner." Thus a historical path signposted by authoritarian rulers- beginning with Dr. Francia- and traced from the past into

the future, passes through General Stroessner, whose regime thereby becomes the key moment of a national history for future generations. A selective authoritarian past, the nation, and Stroessner, thus become interlinked as the only meaningful tradition for the future, and Francia -"el Supremo Dictador'- becomes its founding moment.[72] This is, then, one of those moments when 'la historia vivida' and 'la historia escrita' meet.

In this sense, the Stroessnista state becomes a primary site for the appropriation and reproduction of the figure of Dr. Francia, and the project to recover his remains a key moment in historically legitimising the new dictator's rule. It is this 'Supremo Dictador', the founding principle of a contemporary dictatorship, that El Supremo attacks, confronting the government's 1961 'circular oficial' with his own 'circular perpetua'. On the other hand, in appealing to the figure of 'el Supremo Dictador', the regime's monumentalising evocation does leave its marks in the text of Roa Bastos' novel, identifying, as it moves into the past to gather up the dictator's remains, Stroessner with El Supremo. In other words, returning to the image of the palimpsest, the regime's monumentalising evocation pastes the figure of the former over the figure of the later, making it difficult to tell them apart. In this way, now following Genette, when reading Dr. Francia in Yo el Supremo, we are also at times reading Stroessner too. This is because, as I have pointed out, the Chimera (El Supremo)

is constituted by a many-faced authority structure. As befits such a dialogical text, however, this attempt at identification with hegemonic intent does not go unanswered.

The most obvious references in El Supremo's text to the Stroessner regime are the appearance of a modern instrument of torture in common use by the military dictatorships- including Stroessner's- during the 1970's -"la picana"(94)-, and a parody of surveillance gadgets -the already mentioned "tiestos escucha". There is also the following passage from the novel in which the river speaks to El Supremo as a child:

> "El Takumbú es un cerro muy viejo. Desvaría ya. Sabe poco. Sufre de mal de piedras y del flujo cavernario que dejó en sus entrañas el culto a la Serpiente. ¿Por qué crees que ponen allí a los prisioneros condenados a trabajos forzados por delitos políticos? El Gran Sapo Tutelar ha mandado extraer las piedras para pavimentar esta maldita ciudad. Asunción quedará empedrada de malos pensamientos..."(304)

As Bareiro Saguier has pointed out in his article "La Historia y las historias en Yo el Supremo de Augusto Roa Bastos" with reference to this prison in contemporary Paraguay: "Bajo estas palabras, bordadas de motivos míticos pertinentes, el relator alude a un lugar maldito: la cantera-presidio en la cual son obligados a trabajar los presos políticos. Takumbú es un símbolo en los anales de la represión en el Paraguay."[73] The fact that El Supremo represents himself as a mythical dictator in the novel lends such aspects contemporary meaning for Paraguayan readers, like the young prisoners mentioned by Roa Bastos, as does

the fact that Takumbú was functioning as a prison during the regimes of both Dr. Francia and Stroessner. In this way an abstract identity and continuity of authoritarian structures is hinted at in the text, giving the Stroessner regime's invocation of Francia as a means of legitimacy a certain verosimilitude: it too must act in an authoritarian fashion to 'defend' the nation from its enemies on the 'outside' ('porteñistas' and 'communism'). As Bareiro Saguier goes on to show, however, in terms of substantive social content, the Francia and Stroessner regimes are radically different.

This distinction between the two regimes is dramatised for the reader (especially those in Paraguay in the mid-1970's when the novel was published) by El Supremo's handling of relations with the country's powerful neighbour to the north, Brazil. The dictator reminds the readers of his 'Circular Perpetua' of the history of this relation:

> "Su perfidia y mala fé las tengo de antiguo bien conocidas. Llámase Imperio del Portugal o del Brasil; sus hordas depredadoras de mamelucos, de bandeirantes paulistas a los que contuve e impedí bandereando bandidescamente en territorio patrio. Algunos de ustedes fueron testigos, se acordarán, habrán oído como las fulminantes invasiones incendiaban nuestros pueblos, mataban gente, robaban ganado. Se llevaban cautivos por millares a los naturales."(85)[74]

With El Supremo in power, guaranteeing the nation's safety (an 'inside') from such invasions (an 'outside'), Paraguay's relation with Brazil has been substantially changed -as we have seen, El Supremo presents himself as safeguarding the nation's independence and sovereignty. The dictator

continues:

> "Sobre las relaciones de nuestra República con el Imperio; sobre sus tramposas maquinaciones, acechanzas, bellaquerías y perversiones, antes y después de nuestra Independencia, les instruiré más detalladamente en sucesivas vueltas de esta circular."(85)

He cannot, however, leave the topic before providing a suitable framework for his subsequent 'returns' to Brazil in the 'circular':

> "El pantagruélico imperio de voracidad insaciable sueña con tragarse al Paraguay igual que un manso cordero. Se tragará un día al Continente entero si se lo descuida. Ya nos ha robado miles de leguas cuadradas de territorio, las fuentes de nuestros ríos, los saltos de nuestras aguas, los altos de nuestras sierras acerradas con la sierra de los tratados de límites...El imperio de las bandeiras negreras inventó el sistema de linderos que se desplazan con los movimientos de una inmensa boa."(85)

Like on so many other occasions, here again El Supremo's discourse shifts into the future tense ('se tragará'), allowing for a continuity of political sense between the past (of Francia) and the present of the work's writing (Stroessner), and underlining the possibility, because it is 'perpetua', that El Supremo's 'circular' can address Stroessner's (the 'circular oficial').

When El Supremo does eventually return to this matter in his 'circular' it is in the person of a representative of the Empire, the diplomat Correia da Cámara, visiting Paraguay to convince El Supremo that "...el imperio ofrece su alianza al Paraguay sólo para protegerla de las acechanzas de Buenos Aires." (254). In reality, however, he has come to 'devour' the newly independent republic:

"Apoderarse de la Banda Oriental, aplastar al Plata. Tragarse por fin a su 'aliado'."(254) Once in Asunción, El Supremo takes da Cámara to see a play written by his 'oficial de enlace', Cantero, called "Gasparina": "Gasparina es una mujer con gorro frigio que, según el autor, me representa a mí y a la República...la encarna...una escultural muchacha payaguá que parece en escena cubierta nada más que por las pestañas, los tatuajes y embijes de todos colores que hacen de su cara una máscara."(253) The image of a voracious Brazil 'swallowing' its neighbour is thus overlain with a sexual code so that the government's political 'desire' becomes embodied in its envoy, da Cámara, as sexual desire: the Brazilian diplomat "La (Gasparina, J.K.) *devora* con una mirada obscurecida por el brillo del deseo." (253 -my emphasis).

The gendering and sexualisation of the Republic embodied in Gasparina immediately reveals the envoy's intentions: "Vocé va pedirme que después de la función le envíe a su alojamiento a la Mujer-que-viene-de-los-bosques (the Republic, J.K.), ¿no? ...¡Usted es un genio, Señor Dictador Perpetuo de la República do Paraguay!... ¡Telepatía pura!" El Supremo responds, however, "Vea, mi estimado telepato Correia, usted comprenderá que no puedo prostituir a la República arrimándola a su cámara. No, da Cámara, esta correia no es para su cuero. ¿Puedo yo pedirle a usted que traiga al imperio y lo meta en mi cama? Francamente no."(255-256) Mesmerised by Gasparina, however, da Camara's

discourse is momentarily reduced to a series of overtly animalised sexual phonemes -"Ah y ah y ah."(215)- and at this point, El Supremo puts to him a question of relevance to future readers:

> "Está además la cuestión de esos límites a la bailanta que tenemos que ajustar, eh seor cónsul. Los saltos de agua. Las presas. Sobre todo las presas que quieren convertirnos en una presa ao gosto do Imperio mais grande do mundo!"(255)

With his eyes on the 'Republic', da Camara -"tirado(s) de las bragas"(85)- answers: "Eh. Eh. Eh. Ah! Ah! Ah! Certissimamente!"(255).

The intertwining of two future orientated logics- politics and desire- foregrounds once more the constant unhinging of El Supremo's discourse from the past of Dr. Francia that makes it relevant, in this case, to the present of the Stroessner dictatorship. Again, the key mediating moment between the past and present is the War of the Triple Alliance when, unlike the troops of Argentina, those of Brazil occuppied a devastated Paraguay for some time after the war's end -ensuring the influence of subsequent Brazilian governments and interests in the nation's political society, as well as taking for itself (devouring), as El Supremo 'prophesied', a considerable part of the nation's territory. Since then, these interests have been traditionally represented by the Colorado Party -which the occupying forces were instrumental in creating.[75]

In contrast to Francia's fierce protection of the

Republic ('Gasparina'), Stroessner furthered Brazilian 'penetration' of Paraguayan territory and its economy, and was instrumental in organising the country's contemporary dependency. It is to this situation that El Supremo's references to "los saltos de nuestras aguas" and "las presas" refer. The first alludes to the Guairá Falls, situated at the border between both countries and claimed by successive Brazilian governments since the end of the War of the Triple Alliance -despite signing treaties stating otherwise. The second reference, however, is the most important. Here, El Supremo is telling his readers about the effects of the Paraguayan government's (Stroessner) signing of the Treaty of Itaipú in April, 1973 (just about the time Roa Bastos was finishing writing Yo el Supremo). This so-called 'joint-venture' between the Paraguayan and Brazilian military governments to construct an enormous dam on the Paraná River, it was argued at the time, would only serve to underwrite industrial development in the nearby Brazilian provinces. Firstly, because Paraguayan industry- what there was of it- could not absorb 50% of the energy produced; and secondly, because to pay back the loans borrowed from Brazil to finance the project in the first place, the Paraguayan government would have to sell back most of its surplus energy to Brazil cheaply. Furthermore, not only would this development stimulate Brazilian industry at Paraguayan expense, it would also hand effective control of the nearby Guairá Falls to the Brazilian government. It is for this reason that El Supremo, playing on the double

meaning of the word 'presa', warns about the "*presas* que quieren convertirnos en una *presa* ao gosto do Imperio mais grande do mundo!".[76]

The irruption of Portuguese in the text is significant too, for a parallel development to the country's increasing economic dependence on Brazil has been the steady influx of immigrants -mainly medium-sized farmers- from over the border into the North-East of Paraguay. The result of not adequately backing its own internal colonisation programme- making much of the Stroessner government's 'segunda recosntrucción nacional' a farce from the beginning- has meant that Brazilian immigrants have flooded into the area with support from their own government and, paradoxically, from the Paraguayan dictatorship as well: in 1967 an agrarian statute prohibiting the sale of land to foreigners within 150 km. of the national frontiers was repealed. The result has been that Portuguese is the dominant language of the region, the Cruzeiro its dominant currency, and the population looks to the Brazilian government to meet the demand for public services. This, then, is what El Supremo calls "el sistema de linderos que se desplazan" -contained during the times of Francia and the López dictatorships, but functioning again during the Stroessner regime.[77]

In Yo el Supremo it is suggested that any 'penetration' of the Paraguayan nation-state is equivalent to the penetration of El Supremo himself. This is because, as we

have seen, Cantero identifies the dictator with Gasparina (the Republic) -a fem-inisation of Dr. Francia's name (Gaspar), and one of the only explicit identifications of El Supremo with the real dictator of Paraguay- whose face is a tatooed mask, whilst El Supremo also presents himself as personally embodying the newly independent state: "Yo diría más bien que un Pentágono de fuerzas gobierna mi cuerpo y el Estado que tiene en mí su cuerpo material: Cabeza. Corazón. Vientre. Voluntad. Memoria. Esta es la magistratura íntegra de mi organismo." (128) 'S/he' is thus, so to speak, the nation's 'body-politic'. El Supremo goes on to say, however, that "Lo que sucede es que no siempre el Pentágono funciona en armonía con las alternativas estaciones de flujo-constipación, lluvia-sequía, que malogran o acrecientan las cosechas."(128) There is, arguably, a shift here in the connotations of the word 'Pentágono', marked by the replacement of the indefinite article 'un' for the definite article 'el'. Whilst referring in both cases to those forces (politic) that govern the nation (body), in the second passage the word 'Pentágono' becomes a proper name so that, in an obvious fashion, the U.S. military establishment is immediately brought to the fore as a force disrupting the 'armonía' between the state and the well-being of the country. In the context I have outlined, therefore, El Supremo's "no siempre" takes on a quite a specific meaning: in contrast to his own exemplary protection of the Republic, Stroessner's National Security state -put into place to satisfy U.S. geo-

political strategy in the region- 'delivered' Gasparina to the Brazilian military government's 'cámara'. Post-colonial desire ('tragar') thus became neo-colonial fact, and the sovereignty of the nation defended by Francia undermined.[78]

What is important, therefore, about the 'circular oficial' quoted by the Compiler in the appendix to the novel is that it provides the work with a concrete 'present', a political conjuncture into which the main body of the text- and especially the dictator's own 'circular perpetua'- may be inserted. In being so, however, it undermines the attempt to inscribe the figure of the 'supremo dictador' into the Stroessner regime's own political -that is, hegemonic- script in that 'present'. For it is clear that the latter <u>needs</u> the founding figure of 'el supremo dictador', however ambiguous a sign it may be: within the Colorado Party's epic nationalist narrative, in which a place for Stroessner is made in relation to both a first and second '<u>re</u>construcción nacional', and from which he gains his own historic legitimacy, a founding moment that constitutes a 'beginning' is necessary: the moment of the original '<u>construcción</u> nacional'. And it is this precise moment that the figure of Francia symbolises in Paraguay's dominant political culture. This is because, as we have seen, the independent nation-state emerges from colonialism under his dictatorship -to be subsequently modernised and then defended by the López dictatorships before the War of the Triple Alliance. What <u>Yo el Supremo</u> shows,

nevertheless, is that, whilst necessary, this historical beginning is also an extremely unstable point of departure insofar as the Stroessnista evocation is concerned. This is because, as I have suggested, while there may be some continuity at the level of authoritarian form between the two regimes, this is not the case at the level of specific social content: although Francia prevented the realisation of a Brazilian desire to 'penetrate' Paraguay, Stroessner actually encouraged it, whilst at the same time using the figure of the former to legitimise his activities. It is against such interpellations of the figure of Francia that El Supremo rebels.

In this sense, Yo el Supremo shows how the multifaceted and chimeric figure of Dr. Francia exceeds its interpellation into the Stroessner regime's political narrative; and in doing so foregrounds how any conception of the nation that relies on his figure may be endangered by its -excessive- polysemanticity (or chimeric hibridity). What is more, the fact that the dictator's figure has been persistently articulated to the question of Paraguayan nationality reveals that the latter is not a political given with a univocal meaning either, but rather a cultural construct subject to the logics of both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic texts. In other words, the nation -like the figure of Francia himself- may be fought over. Indeed, as we have seen, in both Stroessner's and El Supremo's memoranda the fate of the nation is inextricably bound up

with the figure of the dictator Francia. But whilst for the former, this is articulated to deepening Paraguay's dependency, for the latter, on the contrary, it is articulated to a project to guarantee the nation's independence. In this regard, the way El Supremo ends his own 'circular' ('perpetua'), paraphrasing the revolutionary Marquis De Sade, is surely aimed, critically, at Stroessner's 'oficial' one and, more positively, at those Paraguayan readers of the novel knowledgeable of, for example, the effects of the Treaty of Itaipú: " Paraguayos, un esfuerzo más si queréis ser definitivamente libres!"(400).

This statement by El Supremo takes us, conveniently, to that other social site (and political subject) mapped out by the Compiler in his diagram of the social field in the appendix of the novel: the 'people'. Under the name of the peasantry, the latter have appeared already as the objects of the State's hegemonic intent in the 1960's and, in the work of Julio César Chaves, as that which is disavowed. In both cases the figure of Francia -as a symbol of the nation and as representative of mute popular power- has been the point of political mediation. But what of the people's own relationship to 'el Supremo Dictador'? And, how does Yo el Supremo intervene in it, if at all? So far, with regard to the discourses of the Paraguayan state and 'la conciencia historiográfica nacional', I have been dealing with the dominant ideologies -both liberal and Colorado- of

Paraguayan political culture, where the circuits for the communication of knowledge and particular relations to the past circulate within such institutions of civil society as education and the political parties (examples of 'historical apparatus'). Through these a 'dominant memory' is disseminated, producing a way of relating to the past that has contemporary significance, and revealing, furthermore, that the making of narratives is a social practice, be it in the form of a 'civilising' transformation or refoundation of the country's political culture (Báez and Chaves) or the '<u>re</u>construction' of a nation and the galvanising of a particular power-bloc (Stroessner). <u>Popular</u> memory, however, whilst sharing the characteristic of embedding the past in the present through narration, has different- although overlapping- circuits of communication which are not so visible to the cultural critic. This is because it does not always leave the same kind of traces, for example, alphabetic writing (surely, one of the main reasons for El Supremo's critique, since in this form of recording the past the figure of Francia has almost universally been condemned -I will return to this question briefly in Part Three). This is what makes the <u>silence</u> registered by Chaves of the peasantry's remembrance of El Supremo highly significant. Whilst it may not leave evidence for historians such as Chaves -whose 'facts' and 'events' are to be found in the written historical archive- this does not mean that the dictator had been completely forgotten -on the contrary.[79] In the appendix the Compiler asserts that "la <u>ciudadanía</u>

toda se pone de pie como un solo hombre" in response to the government's 'circular oficial'. 'Ciudadanía' is the juridico-political definition of the 'people' in a democratic republican state who become, thereby, the source of its legitimacy. There is some irony here, because under a dictatorship the 'people' have been denied those political rights defining citizenship. In this sense it would be possible to read the 'circular oficial' as an empty gesture, since in 1961 there were no real citizens to respond to it. As Dr. Francia ruled over a republic guaranteeing national sovereignty rather than popular democratic rights, this was the case under his regime too. Nevertheless, whilst securing the independence of the nation-state and denying the Paraguayan population political rights, he did ensure, in contrast to Stroessner, that the material interests of the small peasantry (access to land) were satisfied, as against those of the large landowners and the incipient commercial bourgeoisie. As El Supremo points out:

> "Hasta que recibí el Gobierno, el don dividía aquí a la gente en don-amo/siervo-sin-don. Gente-persona/ gente-muchedumbre...Aquí en el Paraguay las fuerzas de la Revolución radican en los campesinos libres, en la incipiente burguesía rural. Especie de 'tercer Estado', incapaz sin embargo de gobernar todavía directamente bajo la forma de un parlamento revolucionario. Incapaz de llevar aún la lucha de la independencia hasta sus últimas consecuencias." (44, 226)

The kinds of policies Dr. Francia put into effect included the following: the abolishing of all ranks above captain in the armed forces (and putting it under his personal control); the nationalisation of the Church and the expropriation of its land-holdings; the impoverishment of

the aristocracy and creole landowners through taxation and penal fines; the abolition of higher education and its extension at primary level for all; and the prohibition of inter-marriage amongst the white upper class. As we have seen he also created 'estancias de la patria' and made sure that all international exchange took place through the state. It was the effects of putting such policies into practice -in Sarmiento's terms, a direct attack on 'civilización' (those institutions which would ensure the reproduction of the incipient bourgeoisie)- that forms the background to the 'pasquín' that opens Yo el Supremo, and to much of the liberal 'historiografía nacional' that constitutes a fundamental part of its artistic material.

In Yo el Supremo the dictator thus presents himself as representing a peasantry ('la gente-muchedumbre' the 'people') that cannot represent itself. It is to this contradiction, amongst other aspects of the novel, that Part Three is dedicated.

To conclude this Part, however, I would like to quote from an interview with the National Co-ordinator of the Movimiento Campesino Paraguayo (MCP), Gabriel García. Recorded in 1987, two years before the overthrow of the dictator General Stroessner, it registers the views of many contemporary Paraguayan peasants -or at least their leaders- on the dictatorship of Dr. Francia, its contemporary relevance, and forms of alternative popular history-making

('counter-history'). It also reveals that hegemony is a complex process that is never completely secured, for the signs constitutive of its text -in this case Dr. Francia- may be very often articulated to other needs and demands. Even within this 'popular' evocation, however, the 'chimera' as authority structure remains:

> "Este núcleo del Comité de Re-organización Campesino Nacional (the immediate precursor of the MCP -J.K.) ...ha luchado por conseguir los datos históricos de la conformación de la sociedad paraguaya, de la clase obrera y lucha del campesinado, especialmente los grandes hechos históricos del país, como por ejemplo fue el primer levantamiento de los indios contra la ocupación española el 24 de abril de 1541, la primera batalla anti-imperialista que surgió en América Latina con los Comuneros en el Paraguay, que fue la gran masa campesina dirigido por un compañero que hoy en día se va constituyendo como ejemplo...como fue José Antequera y Castro. Y más tarde la época de la independencia, y en particular el gobierno patriótico y revolucionario, nacionalista de verdad -el gobierno de Dr. Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia... Nos poco interesa el problema de la democracia del sistema liberal... Sí importa la repartición de tierra, sí importa la independencia total del país de cualquier yugo imperialista ...y sí importa la enseñanza de esa época que haya establecido el gobierno revolucionario de Dr. Francia como por ejemplo la educación popular...No ha habido un solo analfabeto en su época de gobierno revolucionario...Por eso nosotros revindicamos al Dr. Francia como el único gobierno que ha sido patriótico, que ha sido realmente al servicio de nuestro pueblo. Nosotros como paraguayos y como campesinos no necesitamos de calcar ningún modelo a ningún país de ningún lugar de la tierra aunque admiramos a veces la lucha de los pueblos, como el pueblo de Nicaragua, el pueblo heróico de Cuba, de Vietnam, de Cambodia, de Etiopía, de Angola y países en el tercer mundo."[80]

NOTES

1. Augusto Roa Bastos, "Lucha hasta el alba", in Antología Personal, Op. cit.; Augusto Roa Bastos, "El sonámbulo", in Cándido López. Imágenes de la guerra del Paraguay, Franco Maria Ricci, Milan, 1984.

2. Augusto Roa Bastos, Op. cit., 1980, p. 194.

3. "Nota del autor sobre 'Lucha hasta el alba'", in Ibid., p. 186. In "Algunos núcleos generadores de un texto narrativo", Escritura, Op. cit., Roa Bastos says that the story constitutes "el antecedente más antiguo" of his later novel. Indeed, he says that he found it tucked into the pages of Leonardo da Vinci's Treatise on Painting in 1968 as he began compiling Yo el Supremo.

4. Ibid., p. 187, 188.

5. On Lucha hasta el alba, see Milagros Ezquerro, "El cuento último-primero de Augusto Roa Bastos", Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana, No. 19, 1984. She points out the importance of the mother as an oral storyteller: "Acceder a la escritura...es también renunciar a la madre, renunciar a la oralidad, renunciar al guaraní...Para escribir hay que matar al padre...por eso el escritor siempre tendrá que hablar del padre y justificar su muerte.", pp. 120, 121, 124.

6. Augusto Roa Bastos, Op. cit., 1984, pp. 35-36.

7. Milagros Ezquerro, Op. cit., notes that Lucha hasta el alba narrates the appearance of a "sujeto de escritura". For the concept of 'interpellation', see Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" in Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays, New Left Books, London, 1971, pp. 121-173.

8. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", in Illuminations, Johnathan Cape, London, 1979, p. 257.

9. In Seminario sobre "Yo el Supremo" de Augusto Roa Bastos, Op. cit., pp. 61-115. Other important formalist analyses include: Carlos Pacheco, "'Yo el Supremo: la insurrección polifónica", introduction to Augusto Roa Bastos, Yo el Supremo, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas, 1986; and most importantly, Wladimir Krysinski, "Un référent complexe: le dictateur vu par Alejo Carpentier, Miguel-Angel Asturias, Gabriel García Márquez et Augusto Roa Bastos" in his excellent Carrefours de signes. Essais sur le roman moderne, Mouton Publishers, The Hague, 1981.

10. Frederic Jameson, The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act, Cornell University Press, 1981, p. 70.

11. Jean Andreu, Op. cit., p. 111. The question of vision will be looked at from a similar point of view in Chapter six below. With regard to the rest I should point out here that, as we have seen above, the 'Circular perpetua' is not 'dictated' to the 'people-masses', nor is it monologistic in content.

12. Ibid., p. 73.

13. Jacques Lacan, "The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud", in Ecrits. A Selection, Tavistock Publications, London, 1977.

14. See Emile Benveniste, Problemas de lingüística general, I, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico, 1982, pp. 172-178; Tzvetan Todorov, "Las categorías del relato literario" and Gérard Genette, "Fronteras del relato", in Roland Barthes et. al., Análisis estructural del relato, Premia Editora, Mexico, 1982, pp. 159-210. See also, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics, Methuen, London, 1983.

15. Jean Andreu, Op. cit., p. 69-70.

16. Raymond Williams, Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, Fontana, London, 1980, p. 119. This exposition is based on that developed by Williams under his entry on 'History'.

17. Raymond Williams, Op. cit., pp.119-120.

18. Walter Benjamin, Op. cit., p. 259.

19. Colin McCabe, "On Discourse", Economy and Society, Vol. 8, No. 3, August, 1979, p. 305.

20. Ibid..

21. On unconscious, as opposed to conscious, memory, see "Some Motifs in Baudelaire" in Walter Benjamin, Charles Buadelaire. A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism, Verso, London, 1983.

22. Jean Andreu, Op. cit., p. 112.

23. Theodor Adorno, Minima Moralia. Reflections from Damaged Life, Verso Editions, London, 1978, p. 219.

24. For El Supremo as a 'complex referent', see Wladimir Krysinski, Op. cit.. For a more detailed examination of the significance of the 'quimera' in Yo el Supremo see D. Jan Mennell, "La químera en el bestiario de Roa Bastos", Nuevo Texto Crítico, Vol. III, No. 5, Primer semestre, 1990, pp. 159-170.

25. Jean Andreu, Op. cit..

26. Jean Franco has suggested that the work is primarily intended for an avant-garde readership. See her "El pasquín y los diálogos de los muertos. Discursos diacrónicos en 'Yo el Supremo'", in Saúl Sosnowski (Comp.) Augusto Roa Bastos y la producción cultural americana, Ediciones de la Flor/Folios Ediciones, Buenos Aires, 1986, pp.179-196.

27. "Men make their own history, but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted.", Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", in Surveys from Exile, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1977, p.146. In this sense, human beings are subjects in two senses: subjects of history and subject to it. Marx's next sentence would seem to be applicable to the question I am looking at in this Part: "The tradition of the dead generation weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living.", Ibid..

28. See Milagros Ezquerro, "Introducción", Op. cit.; Theorie et Fiction. Le nouveau roman hispano-americain, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Sociocritiques, Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier, 1983, pp. 170-174; "Fonction narratrice et idéologie", in L'Idéologique dans le texte (Textes Hispaniques), Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, Toulouse, 1984, pp. 97-132 -in which she discusses the complex structure of communication of the 'Pasquin' and other 'modalities of writing' that make up Yo el Supremo.

29. The use of the short sentence is also a feature of Roa Bastos' Hijo de Hombre. For examples of aphoristic approaches to thought, see Walter Benjamin, Op. cit., and Theodor Adorno, Op. cit., for whom this form of writing constituted -following Nietzsche- a critique of totalising philosophical systems and narratives.

30. For a discussion of the musically polyphonic aspects of the novel, see Marta Gallo "Pasión del texto: muerte y resurrección en 'Yo el Supremo'", in Lia Schwartz Lerner & Isaias Lerner (eds.), Homenaje a Ana María Barrenechea, Editorial Castalia, Madrid, 1984, pp. 431-437.

31. "Punto por hoy a la perpetua."(121). For "La lección de escritura", see Augusto Roa Bastos, Op. cit., 1980, pp. 165-184.

32. Dominick LaCapra, History and Criticism, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1985, p.20.

33. Ibid., p. 21.

34. Georges Martin, "Répéres pour une étude de la 'compilatoire' historique dans 'Yo el Supremo'", Les Langues Néo-Latines, No. 222, 1977, pp. 21- 41. Martin describes the work's infra-texte as something like an "infrastructure signifiante".

35. Carlos Pacheco, "Diálogo con Augusto Roa Bastos. El escritor es un productor de mentiras", Actualidades, No. 6, 1980-1982, p. 40-41.

36. Gérard Genette, Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degrée, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1982, p. 11, 451.

37. We have also noted above how the Compiler (as 'El') scrutinises 'YO' (the dictator) with his 'ojos de fuego'.

38. Carlos Pacheco, Op. cit., 1980-1982, p. 40.

39. Saúl Sosnowski & Pablo Urbanyi, "Augusto Roa Bastos: exilio y escritura" (Interview with Roa Bastos), Plural, Núm. 143, Agosto, 1983, p. 13.

40. "The beginning, then, is the first step in the intentional production of meaning.", Edward Said, Beginnings. Intention and Method, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985, p. 5.

41. There are various clues throughout the novel that El Supremo is dead: "Mi ventaja es que ya no necesito comer y no me importa que me coman estos gusanos."(76); "No patán. Lo que me cuelga del hombro es la bata de dormir el sueño eterno hecho jirones, la bata andrajosa que ya no alcanza a cubrir la desnudez de mi osamenta."(101); "¡Lo escúcho como si su voz estuviera bajo tierra! ¡No bajo tierra sino en una lata de fideos!"(202). On the relation between macabre consumption and reading, see Daniel Balderston's amusing "Eater-Reception and De-composition: Worms in 'Yo el Supremo'", Modern Language Notes, 101 (2), 1986, pp. 418-423.

42. "In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from the conformism that is about to overpower it.", Walter Benjamin, Op. cit., p. 257.

43. On the relationship between death and the nation in the modern secular world, see Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso, London, 1983.

44. Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1978, passim; Karl Marx, The German Ideology, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1977, pp. 52-54; 64-66.

45. "Entretiens. Augusto Roa Bastos", Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien (Caravelle), No. 17, 1971, p. 209.

46. In this sense it may be worth pointing out that Yo el Supremo itself has been used as an historical source in more recent interpretations of Paraguayan political history. See Richard Alan White, Op. cit., and J.F. Segovia Corvalán, Op.

cit.. For the idea of 'counter-history', see Augusto Roa Bastos, Op. cit., 1977.

47. Daniel Balderston, "Roa's *Julio César*: Commentaries and Reflections", Chasqui-Revista de literatura latinoamericana, Vol. XIX, No. 1, 1990. See also, Daniel Balderston, Op. cit.; Carlos Pacheco, Op. cit., 1986; Georges Martin, Op. cit.; Juan Manuel Marcos' more critical and carnivalesque observations in his "'Yo el Supremo' como 'reprobación' del discurso histórico", in Op. cit., 1983; Karl Kohut, "'Yo el Supremo': reflexión histórica y realidad política actual" in Ludwig Schrader (ed.), Augusto Roa Bastos. Actas del Coloquio Franco-Alemán (Dusseldorf, 1-3 de junio de 1982), Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tubingen, 1984.

48. Daniel Balderston, Op. cit., 1990, p. 16.

49. Gerald Martin, Journeys through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century, Verso, London, 1989, p. 278-279.

50. Julio César Chaves, Op. cit., p. 10.

51. See Cecilio Báez, La tiranía en Paraguay, Asunción, 1903: "¿Qué nos dice la historia? Ella nos enseña que una... tiranía había barbarizado e idiotizado al pueblo paraguayo, que no ha tenido antes de ahora, ni sentido moral, ni sentido político. Carecía de sentido moral, porque en su profunda ignorancia, y por efecto del terror, lloró la muerte del dictador Francia, amó la tiranía, consideró buena la delación y practicó el amor libre como cosa muy conforme a las leyes del pudor.", p. 156. Báez's project for Paraguay, like that of the generation of liberals that fought with the invading forces from Argentina, was that of 'civilización'. For the polemic with O'Leary, see Rubén Bareiro Saguier & Jacinto Flecha, "De lo fantástico popular a lo maravilloso histórico", Río de la Plata, No. 1, 1985, pp. 165-176. For revisionist writers such as O'Leary, "el mariscal López subía solemnemente la áspera cuesta de su calvario, cargando, resignado, la áspera cruz de su infortunio. Marchaba en medio de su pueblo, que lo seguía voluntariamente, llevando consigo a la Patria, que iba a sucumbir con él, después de agotar el sacrificio.", Juan E. O'Leary, El Mariscal López, Talleres Gráficos 'La Prensa', Asunción, 1920 quoted in Ibid., p. 173. For an alternative view, see Oscar Creydt, Formación histórica de la nación paraguaya, Editorial Adelante, Buenos Aires, 1962.

52. Julio César Chaves, Op. cit., p. 10.

53. Ibid., p. 11.

54. J.P. & W.P. Robertson, Four Years in Paraguay (better known as Letters on Paraguay), E.L. Carey & A. Hart, Philadelphia, 1838; J.P. & W.P. Robertson, Francia's Reign of Terror, E. L. Carey & A. Hart, Philadelphia, 1839; J.R.

Rengger & M.F. Longchamp, The Reign of Doctor Joseph Gaspard Roderick De Francia in Paraguay, Kennikat Press, New York, 1971 (1st ed., 1827). See Richard Alan White, Op. cit. for some interesting, but cautionary, observations on the value of these works.

55. Julio César Chaves, Op. cit., p. 187.

56. J.R. Rengger & M.F. Longchamp, Op. cit., p. 204-205.

57. See "Letter XXVII" in J.P. Robertson & W.P. Robertson, Op. cit., 1838, pp. 217-222.

58. Julio César Chaves, Op. cit. p. 228, 381 (my emphasis).

59. Ibid., p. 33-34.

60. "Tropic is the shadow from which all realistic discourse tries to flee. This flight, however, is futile; for tropics is the process by which all discourse *constitutes* the objects which it pretends only to describe realistically and to analyze objectively.", Hayden White, Tropics of Discourse. Essays in Cultural Criticism, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1985, p.2. Insofar as 'realistic discourse' may refer to one which suggests that the 'facts' and 'events' embedded in it may, nevertheless, speak for themselves, White's description may be applied to Chaves' El Supremo Dictador. The well-worn trope in operation here is 'the power-mad-politician'.

61. Julio César Chaves, Op. cit., p. 392-393.

62. Ibid., p. 170.

63. Ibid., pp. 117, 137.

64. Ibid.' p. 171. In this conflict between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' the social tables are turned: "Si al pueblo no le faltaba el sustento, la pobreza en la clase media era general. La burguesía estaba arruinada por la supresión del comercio. Muchos comerciantes aprendieron a hilar para tener de que ocuparse. Una parte se dedicó al juego del naipe y como no hubo papel para las barajas, se inutilizaron muchos libros para fabricarlos.", p. 372-273. See, Yo el Supremo: "¡Qué libros va haber aquí fuera de los míos! Hace mucho que los aristócratas de las veinte familias han convertido los suyos en naipes."(7), and Mitre's observation to this effect quoted in Part One.

65. See ibid., p. 392.

66. James Painter, Paraguay in the 1970's: Continuity and Change in the Political Process, Institute of Latin American Studies Working Papers 9, University of London, London, 1983, p. 3.

67. This surveillance was also a feature of Dr. Francia's regime, and appears in Yo el Supremo in the following way: "Surgen las siluetas emponchados de negro. Los pies lanudos envueltos en pieles de oveja. Rondan, se deslizan ante las casas de los enemigos."(182). El Supremo later calls them "los pies-peludos", which is a translation of the Guaraní term 'pyragues' used for such spies.

68. See R. Andrew Nickson, "Tyranny and longevity: Stroessner's Paraguay", Third World Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 1, January, 1988, and Benjamin Arditi, Estado omnívoro, sociedad estatizada. Poder y orden político en Paraguay, Centro de Documentación y Estudios, Asunción, 1987.

69. See Omar Díaz de Arce, Op. cit..

70. In Cristóbal A. Frutos N, Stroessner: una luz en la noche, Asunción, 1968, p. 35. As this reveals, the Colorado Party's historical narrative was already under construction -for example, by ex-President Juan Natalicio González in a book written after he was overthrown, Como se construye una nacion, Asunción, 1949.

71. Emilio Saguier Aceval, El Supremo, Asunción, 1970, p. 5. This incredible book contains statements like the following: "El Supremo no se mostró como enfermo del complejo de Edipo...", p. 71. That it was written for Stroessner is shown in the following sentence: "Una especie de soberano práctico, que sabía que imperaba en medio de una razón de Estado, como si fuese con permanente estado de sitio.", p. 73 -Stroessner renewed a state of siege every ninety days throughout most of his time in office.

72. During the making of the film "Dictating Terms" for the B.B.C. series Made in Latin America, the producers sent a questionnaire to Stroessner which included the following question: "Una de las figuras más conocidas mundialmente es el Dr. Francia. ¿Qué significa para el país el legado del Dr. Francia?" The response, given on paper headed "Presidencia de la República. Subsecretaria de Informaciones y Cultura", was the following: "El prócer, Dr. Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, fue el pensamiento máximo y la voluntad invencible que puso encima de todas las cosas de la tierra, la independencia, la libertad y la soberanía del Paraguay. En él se encarnó la recia voluntad del pueblo de vivir libre de todo tutelaje extranjero y de él parte la irrevocable determinación de ser libres y el temperamento que sigue presidiendo la porfiada y tenáz acción para ensanchar las dimensiones de la grandeza paraguaya.", Unpublished interview. "Dictating Terms" was shown on November 14, 1989.

73. Rubén Bareiro Saguier, Op. cit., p. 39. In his essay "Las últimas boquedas del tiranosaurio paraguayo", Op. cit., Roa Bastos calls Stroessner a 'tyrantasaurus': "este animal ya casi mítico endiosado como un tótem por el fanatismo de

sus sicarios... descendiente de los feroces carnívoros tecodontes...", p. 1. A possible continuity between El Supremo and Stroessner is hinted at in the following passage from Yo el Supremo: "Dentro de poco no quedará más que esta mano tiranosauria, que continuará escribiendo, escribiendo, escribiendo, aún fosil. Vuelan sus escamas. Se despelleja. Sigue escribiendo."(134) See the comments on the 'cizaña' in Part One. The comments that follow are inspired by similar observations made in Bareiro Saguier's article.

74. Antonio Ruíz de Montoya tells of such "malocas paulistas" in his La conquista espiritual del Paraguay. Montoya was one of the founders of the Jesuit missions in the area, and his chronicle was originally published in 1639. Its full title is Conquista espiritual hecha por los Religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús en la provincias de Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay y Tapé, and has been recently reissued by the Equipo Difusor de Estudios de Historia Iberoamericana, Rosario, 1989.

75. See, Grazziella Corvalan, Ideología y origen social de los grupos políticos en el Paraguay, Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos, Asunción, 1972.

76. See, Efraím Cardoso, 20 preguntas sin respuesta sobre los Saltos del Guairá, Asunción, 1971; Efraín Enríquez Gamón, Itaipú. Aguas de oro, Buenos Aires, 1975.

77. Paraguay: Power Game, Latin American Bureau, London, 1980. See also, Eduardo Galeano, The Open Veins of Latin America, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1973, pp. 211-212, and Domingo Laíno, Paraguay: Fronteras y penetración brasileña, Ed. Cerro Corá, Asunción, 1977.

78. For one such reading of the novel by a Paraguayan critic, see Adriano Irala Burgos, "El horizonte ideológico en 'Yo el Supremo'", in Beatriz Rodríguez Alcalá de González Oddone et. al., Comentarios sobre 'Yo el Supremo', Ediciones Club del Libro No. 1, Asunción, 1975, especially pp. 51-52.

79. On 'dominant' and 'popular' memory, see Popular Memory Group, "Popular Memory: theory, politics, method", in Making Histories. Studies in history-writing and politics, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Hutchinson, London, 1982.

80. Unpublished interview, held with members of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group delegation to Paraguay, May, 1987.

PART THREE

WRITING THE STATE

> "...it was not the arrival of the Westerners that put a stop to the eventual emergence of the State among the Tupi-Guarani, but rather an awakening of society itself to its own nature as primitive society, an awakening, an uprising, that was directed against the chieftainship in a sense, if not explicitly; for, in any case, it had destructive effects on the power of the chiefs. I have in mind that strange phenomenon that, beginning in the last decades of the fifteenth century, stirred up the Tupi-Guarani tribes, the fiery preaching of certain men who went from group to group inciting the Indians to foresake everything and launch out in search of the Land Without Evil, the earthly paradise.
> In primitive society, the chieftainship and language are intrinsically linked; speech is the only power with which the chief is vested...But there is another sort of speech, another discourse, uttered not by the chiefs, but by those men who, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, carried thousands of Indians along behind them in mad migrations questing for the homeland of the gods: it is the discourse of the *karaí*, a prophetic speech, a virulent speech, highly subversive in its appeal to the Indians to undertake what must be acknowledged as the destruction of society. The prophets' call to abandon the evil land (that is, society as it existed) in order to inherit the Land Without Evil, the society of divine hapiness, implied the death of society's structure and system of norms. Now that society was increasingly coming under the authority of the chiefs, the weight of their nascent power. It is reasonable, then, to suppose that if the prophets, risen up from the core of society, proclaimed the world in which men were living to be evil, this was because they surmised that the misfortune, the evil, lay in that slow death to which the emergence of power could sooner or later condemn Tupi-Guarani society, insofar as it was a primitive society, a society without a State. Troubled by the feeling that the ancient primitive world was trembling at its foundations, and haunted by the premonition of a socio-economic catastrophe, the prophets decided that the world had to be changed, that one must change worlds, abandon the world of men for the world of gods...And the prophetic 'machine' worked perfectly well, since the *karaí* were able to sweep astonishing masses of Indians along with them, so spellbound (as one would say today) by the language of those men that they would accompany them to the point of death."[1]

This passage from Pierre Clastres' Society Against the State suggests that to translate the Guarani word *karaí* -another

name used, as we have seen, to describe 'el supremo dictador'- into the English (or Spanish) as 'chief' (or 'jefe') is clearly problematic, for it does not capture either the complexity or the socio-cultural connotations of its meaning within the tradition of the Guaraní peoples, especially the non-integrated Mbaya tribe, for whom the *karaí* is (or was) rather a particular kind of 'anti-chief'.[2] Paradoxically, however, as Clastres goes on to point out, in the very process of undermining the emerging power of the real chieftains in Guaraní society, the *karaí* also, in a sense, fulfilled their political desires: "Armed only with their word, the prophets were able to bring about a 'mobilisation' of the Indians; they were able to accomplish that impossible thing in primitive society: to unify, in the religious migration, the multifarious variety of the tribes. They managed to carry out the whole 'program' of the chiefs with a single stroke."[3] In effect, it was in all probability this paradoxical location of the *karaí* (who in subverting one kind of power, represented another) within Guaraní society that eventually enabled some of them to become chiefs too after the Spanish conquest, leading native Indian resistance against colonisation and Jesuit 'reduction'.[4]

As is evident, Clastres defines 'primitive' societies as those in which there is no centralised principle of political order organising its relations of power, a State; where, that is, "the chief's word carries no force of law."[5]

For this reason, the *karaí* as a religious institution marked the moment of an emerging social contradiction:

> "...la contradiction que représente en soi le prophète-chef pourrait être le signe et tout ensemble la solution, d'une contradiction plus profonde de la societé guarani, entre le politique et le religieux. On sait qu'il existait certainement sur le plan politique de fortes tendences centripètes dans les sociétés Tupi-Guarani: elles sont attestees notamment par l'apparition de grands chefs dont l'autorité était reconnue au niveau de la province...et par des tentatives (ponctuelles et souvant avortées, il est vrai) de confédération. A l'inverse, la religion exprime surtout des forces centrifuges, negatrice du social... telle est, interprétée sur le plan sociologique, la signification de la Terre sans Mal."[6]

The *karaí* were the privileged carriers of this centrifugal religion, their language a secret language that put them in contact with the gods and which they articulated against the strengthening centripetal power of the chiefs. This religion was, however, a 'secular' one, in the precise sense that -like for Macario's reading of Catholicism in <u>Hijo de Hombre</u>- it was <u>this</u>-worldly: the Land Without Evil, for the Mbaya, exists here and now, but -and this is the reason for their migrations- in another place.[7]

It is almost as if the Tupi-Guaraní had, in the deterritorialising discourse of their prophets, prepared themsleves for the possible appearance of the State. Like the more classical utopias of post-Renaissance Europe -which presupposed the conquest of the 'New World' and the dissemination of stories about other societies, like the Tupi-Guarani, supposedly living 'sin ley y sin rey'- the *karaí*'s words were simultaneously a radical critique of the

present and a 'future' (only in the sense that the Indians had to travel to get there, since, as we have seen, the Land Without Evil existed here and now) orientated projection of another social space. What marks them as different, however, is that the words of the *karaí* did not enjoy -if that is the right word-the literary autonomy of classical European utopias, but rather had concrete 'magical' (or religious) effects: 'spellbound' -as Clastres suggests- native Indians abandoned their present world and followed the *karaí* to another. Their words were not the object of disinterested contemplation. But not only was their discourse a negation of the present social world. The *karaí* themselves were also radically anti-social. They lived alone at the margins of tribal villages and 'provinces', ignoring all their political alliances, and were permitted to cross the frontiers existing between different (at times warring) groups. They were, in this sense, like their discourse, radically nomadic -so much so that for the confused Spanish chroniclers of the time they appear-ed to be 'everywhere and no-where'. They also, furthermore, negated the patrilineal kinship allainces of Tupi-Guarani society. It was said that they 'had no father'. Not because they thought of themselves in matrilineal terms, however, but because they were thought of as descendants of the gods.[8] In this sense, the actual marginalised location inhabited by the *karaí* pre-figured the Land Without Evil and could be thought of in terms of what Michel Foucault has called a 'crisis hetrerotopia': "privileged or sacred or

forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly etc.." He adds that these kinds of social spaces -heterotopias, which unlike utopias, are <u>real</u>- "are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted."[9] In the context outlined by Hélène and Pierre Clastres, where Tupi-Guaraní societies were in the process of consolidating a territorial domain around an emerging State, the space occuppied by the *karaí* represented its radical negation. Nomadic, freely crossing all boundaries, and denying all political and kinship alliances, the *karaí* rebelled against such power with the power of their sacred words -to such effect that the emerging politically structured society was completely destroyed as the Indians abandoned everything to join those 'mad migrations'. Singing and dancing, they left, mesmerised by the words of the prophets, for the Land Without Evil; that is, for a land without a State.

We do not possess the information necessary to trace the transformations in the usages of the word *karaí* in the Guaraní language during the colonial and subsequent post-independence era. Nevertheless, it is clear from the above that such a transformation has taken place. From referring to a particular kind of radically subversive 'prophet' (and

how problematic is <u>this</u> translation?), it eventually came to designate a local or national political 'chief' in Paraguayan culture. It is well-known, however, that during these periods -especially the colonial era- there were significant shifts in the semantic content of a number of key Guaraní words. This was a result, among other things, of the transcultural processes set in motion by the Jesuit Missions in which the Guaraní language was adopted -and in the process, transformed- for the missionary work of 'reduction'. On the other hand, I have also pointed out how in response to these 'reductions' and the colonial 'encomienda' system, some *karaí* effectively became chiefs- against whom they had once rebelled- as a means of galvanising resistance, rather than leading the native Guaraní to the <u>Tierra sin Mal</u>.[10] Thus, from referring to a person -a nomad- charged with destroying the State, in <u>Yo el Supremo</u> (and other of Roa Bastos texts) the term *karaí* has come to refer to a character determined to create and/or defend one: to the 'founder' of the Paraguayan nation-state. We have already seen how El Supremo defends the nation's boundaries against Brazilian and Porteño political 'desire'. He also, moreover, defends it against those Indian tribes resistant to integration: "Celebré tratados con los pueblos indígenas. Les proveí de armas para que defendieran sus tierras contra las depradaciones de las tribus hostiles. Más también los contuve en sus límites naturales impidiéndoles cometer los excesos que los propios blancos les habían enseñado."(46)[11] It is to this story of the

creation of a modern nation-state -the securing of a secular post-colonial domain- that this Part is dedicated. In Chapter Six I put forward an hypothesis concerning the relation between the historical novel and the development of bourgeois society in Latin America. If in Part One we saw how the State emerged as an object of literary concern for Roa Bastos during the crisis of the Liberal State between the 1940's and 1970's, here I want to suggest that the development of the historical novel itself may be usefully thought in relation to the central importance of the State- in contrast to the market- for the development of capitalism in the region. In Chapter Seven I attempt to show how Yo el Supremo, in the figure of the dictator, re-enacts the origins of the modern Republican State as told by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in The Social Contract -yet another instance of intertextuality in the novel. El Supremo, as we shall see, dramatises the double-bind in which Rousseau's fictional Legislator is caught and thus betrays the 'people' for whom he is supposed to act. Finally, in Chapter Eight, I confront the dictator -a powerful narrator for whom the word does carry the force of law- with the other important narrative instance of the novel, the Compiler, thus bringing together and extending those observations I have already made concerning the compositional technique of compilation.

CHAPTER SIX

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL IN LATIN AMERICA

The publication in quick succession of three dictatorship novels by well-known Latin American writers in the mid-1970's -Alejo Carpentier's El recurso del metodo, Gabriel García Márquez's El otoño del patriarca and Roa Bastos's Yo el Supremo[12]- during a period in the area's political history which also saw the imposition of bureaucratic-authoritarian military dictatorships in many countries, brought the question of the region's political structures right into the domain of literary studies itself. Thus, for example, the recent concern for literary production in the context of 'dependent fascism', and the recuperation of such resistance forms as the 'testimonio' as literary genres in their own right.[13] With regard to the re-emergence of the dictatorship novel in particular, after a hiatus of approximately thirty years (Miguel Angel Asturias's El Señor Presidente was published in 1949, although written in the 1930's), speculation as to the reasons for its long history in Latin America led critics to reflect, even if indirectly, on the relationship between literature and the area's political cultures.

Various reasons for this reappearance were given in the literary criticism that took these works as their object. Critics looked at the contemporary political scenario in Latin America, and seeing the proliferation of dictatorial regimes throughout the Southern Cone drew immediate and

understandable conclusions: the dictatorship novel was a reflection of this state of affairs.[14] However, in the case of Yo el Supremo, as we have seen above, this blinded its commentators to the dual social inscription of the text and its relationship to the revolutionary -albeit short-lived- political developments in Argentina where Roa Bastos wrote it during the late 1960's and early 1970's. Some also looked for deeper cultural explanations, and in many cases resorted to mythical or psychoanalytic categories to explain the endurance and continuity of the literary series. The fascination for the caudillo-type figure amongst writers, and -it was suggested-the Latin American 'people', was thus explained by recurring to such ideas as the 'collective unconscious' and the 'archetype' (Jung), the particular (neo-) colonial character of the Latin American 'oedipal complex' (Freud), or to the paradigmatic ordering of social imaginaries in the area (Lacan). This explains, for example, why Angel Rama thought the dictatorship novel functioned like a psychoanalytic 'miroire', as a 'literatura de reconocimiento'.[15]

One of the problems with such interpretations is that they tend to imply that Latin American political history works completely behind the backs of the 'people',[16] who are then 'scripted' either in terms of models which are always already vertically organised -like dictatorships and, as we have seen, the 'cizaña' and 'chimera'- around 'arquetipos' or 'ejes paradigmáticos' which endlessly reproduce

themselves like nature, or in terms of ready to hand 'oedipal' narratives grafted on to social categories. In this way, history and political conflict are in danger of being emptied of their specific social contents in which relations of real power in extremely complex cultural contexts come into play. The difficulty, as I attempted to show in Part Two above, is to try and think both these aspects (culture and politics) at the same time, and to appreciate the violence with which structures of authority (the Chimera) are sometimes imposed.

Rather than running the risk of possibly further pathologising peoples and their histories, I would like to turn to another hypothesis which has the advantage of being both socio-historical and literary.[17] In his excellent article "'Tirano Banderas' en la narativa hispanoamericana (la novela del dictador 1926-1976)", Bernardo Subercaseaux suggests that:

> "La novela del dictador constituye -en una visión panorámica del género- una de las formas asumidas en este siglo por la novela histórica. Significa el abandono de la representación fidedigna o en clave de la realidad. E introduce en la novela histórica -influída por las preferencias vanguardistas- el criterio de la autonomía de la obra...Significa también la confluencia de la conciencia crítica con la conciencia estética, el encuentro fructífero de dos sistemas literarios: uno que busca el cambio social y otra con voluntad de creación autónoma. Se trata, además, de una veta que ha permitido a los narradores hispanoamericanos volcar su voluntad historicista y plasmar artísticamente una visión política."[18]

We have already attempted to situate Yo el Supremo in

its conjunctural political contexts in terms relevant to what Lukacs noted was one of the historical novel's most important characteristics -the historical anachronism- and showed how the novel can be read, at one level, as a critical *pre-history of the present*.[19] Here, I want to put forward a hypothesis about reading the dictatorship novel, particularly Yo el Supremo, as a transformed historical novel, and then illustrate it by reconstructing the story of the dictator told in Yo el Supremo. I will then go on to briefly look at the cultural significance of the dictator and the Compiler as narrative instances. This means pinpointing the socio-historical significance of the object of the novel's discourse -in other words, answering the question: what is the particular significance of dictatorship in Yo el Supremo? Most critics have pointed out that the novel deals with two main themes: writing and power. What has been ignored, however, is their articulation to the novel's historical and political contents.

In his important work on the historical novel, Lukacs notes that in its long history from its origins in the early nineteenth century with the work of Sir Walter Scott, right up to the anti-fascist historical novel in the 1930's, the genre has aimed "at presenting the movement of popular life in history". This is not just an ideological feature of these novels but, most importantly for Lukacs, a compositional principle too. Classical historical

novelists, like Scott and Tolstoy, "were able to grasp and portray popular life" in their texts.[20] What he is referring to here is the question of literary character or, more exactly, the idea of the 'mediocre hero' in the historical novel, whose importance, for our purposes at least, is revealed in his discussion of the genre's emergence with the work of Scott.

According to Lukacs, the historical novel emerged in Europe when history became a mass experience for the first time during the French Revolution, the revolutionary wars and the rise and fall of Napoleon; that is, when the modern conception of history as 'Geschichte' -described above- emerged. During the political and military upheavals of that period, the raising of mass armies and the development of national propaganda, "a feeling of nationhood became the experience and property of the peasantry, the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie and so on...". Nations became "their self-created motherland". Scott, in the "relative stability" of England was able to "channel this newly-awoken historical feeling artistically into a broad, objective, epic form".[21] His 'conservative philistinism' was fundamental to his literary greatness. In portraying the reality of the great crises in English history he chose, in opposition to Romantics like Byron, the 'middle way' between the extremes of contending forces, so that their heroic leaders remained in the background of his novels. Lukacs insists that one of the major compositional characteristics

of Scott's works, one that defined his greatness as an author, was the representation of history through the "more or less average English gentleman". His novels are "unsurpassed in their portrayal of the decent and attractive as well as narrow-minded features of the English 'middle class'". These are Scott and Lukacs' 'mediocre heroes', who are important from the point of view of literary consumption too, since, in contrast to the world-historical heroes of the Romantics, they arouse "the human sympathies of the reader"[22] -in other words, identification amongst the growing middle class readership of the early nineteenth century. Paraphrasing Angel Rama, it was a literature of middle class 'reconocimiento'.

The emergence of a historical novel peopled by 'mediocre heroes' is not, however, only associated with the interrelated experiences of the logistics of war (raising armies and propaganda) and national integration. There is also, according to Lukacs, another important socio-historical development determining the genre's preference for these types of characters. In a philosophical turn in his argument he appeals to Hegel's understanding of 'maintaining individuals', the 'mediocre hero 's' extra-literary equivalent:

> "Scott's manner of composition here shows a very interesting parallel to Hegel's philosophy of history. For Hegel, too, the 'world-historical individual' arises upon the broad basis of the world of 'maintaining individuals'. 'Maintaining individuals' is Hegel's all-embracing term for men in 'civil society', it describes society's uninterrupted self reproduction through the activity

> of these individuals. The basis is formed by the personal, private, egoistic activity of individual human beings. In and through this activity the socially general asserts itself."[23]

In the German 'civil society' is rendered as '<u>burgerlich</u>'. An alternative translation back into the English would give us '<u>bourgeois</u> society', the realm, according to both Hegel and Marx, of private economic interest, private property and its juridico-political conditions of existence and reproduction in the market place.[24] Thus, in Lukacs's words, the heroes of the historical novel "grew out of the being of the age": the development of civil (bourgeois) society as it "oppose(d) itself hostilely to the old".

These observations enable us to trace a bare outline (another social diagram) of the elements constitutive of the European historical novel's social inscription and logic of production. In his reconstruction, Lukacs traces a whole circuit of literary production and consumption articulating the <u>popular</u> with the individual <u>middle class</u> reader - identified with the '<u>mediocre hero</u>'- and the history of the <u>Nation</u>, mediated through and organised by the economic dynamic of the <u>market</u> (civil society). Scott's work in this view, insofar as it represents a 'prehistory of the present' and the origins of the historical novel itself, tells the story of *the configuration of the nation by the middle class subjects of civil society* (the bourgeoisie).

In a recent article on the development of the historical novel in Latin America, Noé Jitrik foregrounds some of its

differences from the European model reconstructed by Lukacs.[25] The most important, and relevant to our discussion here, are: (1) the historical novel's articulation of cultural (national) identities, rather than the historical identity of a social class; and (2) the different kinds of heroes predominant in the composition of Latin American historical novels.

For Jitrik, the historical novel in Latin America is also "de búsqueda". Not, however, of the prehistory of the bourgeoisie and civil society as in Europe, but of "identidad...nacional, de legitimidad: se quiere, a través de sus mecanismos, de saber no de donde se procede sino qué se es frente a otras identidades, siendo la identidad propia problemática".[26] The historical novel in Latin America is thus inscribed into an intellectual desire to assert post-colonial independence in the cultural as well as political sphere. Whilst in Europe the experience of nationhood is articulated to the development of a market-regulated civil society, in Latin America (including Paraguay) it is articulated to the question of political independence -the formation of sovereign nation-states- and cultural identity.

The social and literary significance of this may be found in the second difference pointed out by Jitrik: "reside en los personajes, que no son históricamente secundarios como en Europa sino principales, como lo prueba la fascinación que ejercen Juan Manuel de Rosas, Henri

Christophe, Pancho Villa o Francia, sin por ello", he goes on to say, "abjurar del realismo ni convertirse al romanticismo".[27] All the literary characters Jitrik mentions, from such novels as El reino de este mundo by Carpentier and Yo el Supremo by Roa Bastos, are also some of the area's major political figures from the past. The implication that seems to be insinuating itself here, therefore, is that the production of the historical novel in Latin America is overdetermined by the political, rather than by the economic -as was the case in Europe.[28] This is the first aspect of the process of transformation undergone by the historical novel in Latin America. I shall now turn to the second aspect, which will, I hope, further explain the first.

Jitrik insists that the fact that Latin American historical novels are composed around major political figures is not symptomatic of their romanticism, as would have been the case if Lukacs's European model was mechanically imposed. Indeed, he underlines their realism in this regard. Why? This he does not explain. Perhaps the answer is to be found in the 'underdevelopment' of bourgeois civil societies in Latin American countries.

It is not, of course, that Latin American nations are not predominantly capitalist. They are. However, as the theories of imperialism and dependency have demonstrated, the dynamic centres for capitalist development and

accumulation have historically been located outside the sub-continent, in the metropolis. In the words of José Carlos Mariátegui, the bourgeoisies of most Latin American nations are 'inorganic', that is, subordinated to the interests of the international market, on the one hand, and the landed 'oligarchy' on the other. He said of Perú, for example, that "contra el sentido de la emancipación republicana se ha encargado el espíritu del feudo -antítesis y negación del espíritu del burgo- la creación de una economía capitalista".[29] Furthermore, Latin American social formations are also structurally heterogen[20]us. The co-existence and interpenetration of different relations of production has constantly problematised projects for national unity, that is, a general experience of communality as nationhood. Thus, from Mariátegui's point of view, Latin American nation-states are also 'inorganic'.[30]

In his important book La crisis del estado en América Latina, Norberto Lechner provides us with a clue as to the effects of this situation relevant to our discussion of the Latin American historical novel. He suggests that these two factors -"subordinación del proceso de acumulación del capital al movimiento del mercado internacional (dependencia en sentido estricto)" and the "yuxta y sobreposición de distintas relaciones de producción"- dialectically produce and reproduce "*la disgregación de la Sociedad Civil*...No se cristaliza la dimensión social de la práctica...tampoco se cristaliza el orden como *forma de generalidad*".[31] In other

words, the 'socially general' does not, following Lukacs, 'assert itself' -so that the 'national', for example, as one of these 'formas de generalidad', becomes recurrently problematic. The continual 'breaking up' of civil society- facilitating the representation of political struggles in the terms of a 'pueblo/oligarquía' antagonism- means that the bourgeois state, as the formal representation of the general interest at the level of the political, is, in Lechner's view, permanently in crisis. It can only provide for national unity through coercion, rather than hegemony.[32] For this reason, he continues, the state as repressive apparatus predominates over the state as general interest in Latin America. This means that, rather than formally representing the contradictions of civil society as 'equality' before the law, it represents one of its poles[33]: for Mariátegui, the political alliance between a dependent landed bourgeoisie and international capital, which he calls 'gamonalismo'.[34] (It was, of course, against such economic and political structures that Populism emerged in the 1930's and subsequently became radicalised after the Cuban Revolution.) Given the lack of a dynamic 'organic' (bourgeois) civil society, the state as 'aparato estatal' is the organ through which both capitalism and national unity are simultaneously and, as we have seen, problematically imposed. Lechner says:

> "Para compensar la falta de una cohesión valórica y normativa en la sociedad se recurre al 'intervencionismo estatal'. Se busca en la racionalidad formal de la burocracia y su 'esprit de corps' un sustituto para la integración social. Ello significa trasladar múltiples funciones al

> aparato del Estado, que requiere un gran incremento de su capacidad ejecutiva. No es pues casual que surjan dictaduras cuyo objetivo primordial sea el fortalecimiento del aparato estatal como medio para instaurar la unidad nacional. Es el caso, de una u otra manera, del Dr. Francia en Paraguay, de Rosas en Argentina, de García Moreno en Ecuador, de Gómez en Venezuela o del Porfiriato mexicano."[35]

If these propositions are correct, we may conclude that the development of bourgeois nations in Latin America has been a process whose most important agent is not civil society but political society; concretely, the <u>state</u> as an organising and repressive apparatus. For this reason it is perhaps possible to suggest that the historical novel in Latin America tells the story of the configuration of national <u>political</u> societies (rather than national <u>civil</u> societies), hence the apparent 'realism' of composing them, in a context where the 'people' are not formally equal before the law, around major political figures struggling to impose different projets of national unity and identity. This is because, despite the wars of Independence, the nation had not become "the self-created motherland" of the people in their generality. Rather than articulating the nation and the middle class through the history of civil society, as in the European model, Latin American historical novels articulate the <u>nation</u> with a relatively powerless and state-dependent <u>middle class</u> *through the history of (bourgeois) <u>political society</u>.*[36] This, I think, is the socio-literary significance of the transformation of the historical novel in Latin America. Tentatively: it involves a displacement from narrating the story of a national

bourgeoisie to narrating the story of a dramatically problematic nation-state. And this, of course, is the social content of the crucial passage from Yo el Supremo which I quoted in Part One: the continual re-imposition of "el gigantesco árbol" of absolutism over the general will ("la Persona-Muchedumbre").

Returning to Subercaseaux: if the dictatorship novel is one of the forms adopted by the historical novel in Latin America, it focuses more than any other the socio-historical dynamic I have described above. For what is a modern dictatorship? If we take seriously the idea that it is the concentration and institutionalisation of power into the hands of one person -resulting in the abolition of the public sphere as such- then we can answer quite categorically that it is a form of state; or rather, a regime that has invaded and taken over the state.[37] Moreover, from a literary point of view, by thus appropriating and secularly embodying the state apparatus- legislative, excutive and judiciary- they make the state narratable.[38] When the state is dictatorial in the strict sense, it becomes possible to narrate its story as if that of an individual hero. In Yo el Supremo and other dictatorship novels, the state really becomes, for the reasons I have outlined above, fetishised, that is, a subject endowed with the human power to speak. Indeed, El Supremo, the State, 'states', it ('he') never stops speaking-dictating![39] In sum, by representing the

condensation of political society into one person (the dictator), the dictatorship novel, as a version of the Latin American historical novel, tells the story of state formation and crisis and/or the story of the frustrations and state-dependency of middle class civil society in Latin America.[40] In the chapter that follows I shall attempt to trace the history of this kind of speech-writing -dictation- in Yo el Supremo, and then, in Chapter Eight, compare it to the literary practice of compilation.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE 'LEGISLATOR' AND THE ORIGINS OF THE STATE

The dictator's story in Yo el Supremo is quite difficult to reconstruct. This is because of the many ways information is organised, represented and distributed throughout the text. We are confronted -as I have shown above- with what is evidently a construction, made out of a constellation of points of view, attempting, from the two-dimensionality of the page, to produce three-dimensionality -almost like a cubist painting.[41] But the work is not just a static jigsaw puzzle. Even though the arrangement of the material functions to subvert the dominant discourse of El Supremo (one of the functions of the Compiler), the tension between textual fragmentation and textual unity -the one and the many texts- is, in a sense, a discursive inflection of the attempt by the dictator to impose his own will (text: the 'circular perpetua') on others. I will concentrate here on its political (and philosophical) dimensions.[42]

"Desandando años, desengaños, traiciones, malavisiones ..." (347), the voice of El Supremo emerges from the dead,[43] and instal-s itself right in the centre of power, the 'Casa de Gobierno', from where, as if in a panopticon, he watches, listens and orders society, engages with those voices that have made him into a myth, and traces the story of his eventual failure from the heights of the political.[44] The following passage, situated towards the end of the novel, but before the 'last dictator' -the Tenebrion Obscurus-

devours what remains of his flesh, reveals and summarises this narrative, condensing within it some of the work's most important themes, and giving us a clue as to their meaning:

> "En otro tiempo, me repito, escribía, dictaba, copiaba. Me lanzaba por las pendientes de papel y tinta. De repente el punto. Súbito final al desenfreno. El punto en que lo absoluto empieza a tomar del revés la forma de la historia. En un principio creí que yo dictaba, leía y obraba bajo el imperio de la razón universal, bajo el imperio de mi propia soberanía, bajo el dictado de lo Absoluto. Ahora me pregunto: ¿Quién es el amanuense? No el fide-indigno, desde luego." (441)

This fragment of the text tells us that once ("En otro tiempo...En un principio...") El Supremo had a particular kind of power; now, aware of his proximate demise, he realises that he has lost it, that it may have even been an illusion. A change has come about which has put an end ("punto" -full stop) to the 'absolute', and given birth to history, now out of the dictator's control. The implicit answer to his last question ("¿Quién es el amanuense?) is that <u>he</u> is now the secretary -the 'fide-indigno'-, that <u>he</u> (rather than Patiño) is now being dictated to by history, and is to be written by, or rather, in it.[45] The narrative thus traces a movement from a situation in which power is held -when El Supremo dictated history- to another in which it is no longer. Historical fluidity and change has now escaped his grasp/rule and undermined it. Very simply, the above passage informs us that <u>Yo el Supremo</u> tells the story of a 'rise and fall'.

As he narrates his story, El Supremo recalls the moment he was expelled from the Real Colegio in Córdoba: the

'rector' complains of his reading "los libros y las ideas de estos libertinos impostores" -'los anti-Cristos'. The young student answers, prefiguring his own political project after his country's independence from colonial rule:

> "Todavía queréis destruir a Newton a fuerza de silogismos... Nosotros, en cambio, pensamos constuir *todo nuevo* mediante albañiles como Rousseau, Montesquieu, Diderot, Voltaire, y otros tan buenos como ellos." (161)

All these authors are associated with the desacralising anti-Absolutist intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment, widely read, although prohibited, in late eighteenth century colonial Latin America, and influential in the formation of an independence-minded creole elite. And it is this kind of language that informs El Supremo's description of his 'failure' above (remember too his discourse on the 'cizaña').

What is meant when he tells us that he thought he "dictaba, leía, y obraba bajo el imperio de la razón universal, bajo el imperio de mi propia soberanía, bajo el dictado de lo Absoluto"? The Enlightenment had two dialectically related moments: in its negative aspect, influenced by advances in the natural and human sciences, it criticised sacred explanations of the universe and similar justifications of absolutist monarchy; and in its positive aspect, it argued for the universality of reason, the sovereignty of the individual subject,[46] and various rationally organised state forms, be they liberal, as in the case of Locke, or republican as in the case of Rousseau.

Since, for the Enlightenment, reason was by definition universal -in the sense that everyone has it and that it is the same for everyone -it became possible to think the possibility of planning history ('Geschichte'), and, to be sure, organising a state, rationally. This, El Supremo says, was his intention: "Sacar del caos de lo improbable la constelación proba. Un Estado girando en el eje de su soberanía. El poder soberano del pueblo, núcleo de energía en la organización de la República." (107). The philosophical context of his discourse, therefore, is provided by theories of the bourgeois state associated with the Enlightenment and its political context -that is, its actualisation in the French Revolution and the Paraguayan and Latin American struggles for independence and the creation of sovereign republics. In other words, by the context of the formation (theory and practice) of modern bourgeois nation-states. In this sense, one of the major themes of Yo el Supremo is the political (rather than economic) origins of modernity (in Paraguay).

That El Supremo should mention Rousseau first amongst the above list of 'iluminados' should come as no surprise. His influence throughout Latin America was extensive,[47] and although it is not certain whether Dr. Francia himself read Rousseau, El Supremo obviously did.[48] Indeed he glosses him, almost exactly:

> "La gente-muchedumbre; en otras palabras, la chusma laborativa-procreativa producía los bienes, padecía todos los males. Los ricos disfrutaban de todos los bienes. Dos estados en aparencia inseparables.

> Igualmente funestos al bien común: Del uno salen los causantes de la tiranía; del otro, los tiranos... precisamente porque la fuerza de las cosas tiende sin cesar a destruir la igualdad, la fuerza de la Revolución debe siempre tender a mantenerla: Que ninguno sea lo bastante rico para comprar a otro, y ninguno lo bastante pobre para verse obligado a venderse... yo quiero reunir los extremos... La igualdad no se da sin libertad... Esos son los extremos que debemos reunir." (44)[49]

Like Rousseau, El Supremo puts the general interest of the community above the private interests of individuals. His project is, therefore, decidedly anti-Liberal -which means, in the historical context El Supremo is addressing, an anti-'Porteñista' one. '(L)a fuerza de las cosas' undermining equality -fundamental for the freedom desired by both Rousseau and El Supremo- is constituted by the egoism ('amour-propre') or possessive individualism structuring civil society, and considered by classical liberal political theorists such as John Locke as the 'natural rights' of 'man' and the foundation of modern societies. In the latter's view, the state's function is merely to guarantee these rights, that is, private property and its corresponding notions of individual freedom.[50] Rousseau, on the contrary, argued that private property was not a natural fact but a social phenomenon. For this reason, in his Discourse on the Origin of Inequality,[51] the idea of a mythical 'state of nature' -in which there is no private property- has a historical and critical dimension, functioning to reveal that the egoistic pursual of private individual interests in civil society is far from natural and, furthermore, that it damages communal freedom. Hence the classical republican demand in Rousseau's work, later

taken up by the Jacobins in the French Revolution, not to mention El Supremo above, for an economy based on small peasant farms in which no one would be wealthy enough to exploit the labour of others.[52]

The political co-rollary of this equality is a conception of freedom based on direct popular (peasant) democracy in which sovereignty lies with the people, the 'general will'.[53] The 'social contract' consists precisely in the recognition and imposition of this will over and above the chaos of the 'will of all', that is, of conflicting private interests, which, for Rousseau, can only be realised <u>morally</u>, in and through the 'general will' itself (rather than, for example, through the abolition of private property) which is <u>one</u> and indivisible. Very briefly then, the central problem addressed by both Rousseau and El Supremo is: how to make <u>citizens</u> of private individuals? The answer, given its economic connotations and its character as an originary event (a self-constituting moral community: the 'social contact'), is revolutionary. This, however, is where Rousseau and El Supremo begin to part company. For if on the one hand the latter considers himself to be the mythic founder and defender of a nation -a heroic deed in the republican tradition- his appropriation of the people's sovereignty -"El Estado-soy-Yo" (180)- ultimately condemns him to failure and betrayal.

The quotation from Rousseau's <u>The Social Contract</u> in <u>Yo</u>

el Supremo should not be read, therefore, as just another example of erudite intertextuality on Roa Bastos's part. Nor is it just a formal (meta-)compositional gesture. The point is rather to see how the dilemmas of Rousseau's work are inscribed, dramatised and tested in Roa Bastos's own.

The Social Contract provides the occasion for such a situation which is relevant both to the context of post-Independence struggles to secure Paraguayan national sovereignty, as told in Yo el Supremo, and to the interpretation of the text itself. It does so in a character Rousseau calls the 'Lawgiver', whose function is described in the following way:

> "Laws are really nothing other than the conditions on which civil society exists. A people, since it is subject to laws, ought to be the author of them. The right of laying down the rules of society belongs only to those who form the society; but how can they exercise it? Is it to be by common agreement, by a sudden inspiration? Has the body politic an organ to declare its will? Who is to give it the foresight necessary to formulate enactments and proclaim them in advance, and how is it to announce them in the hour of need? How can a blind multitude, which often does not know what it wants, because it seldom knows what is good for it, undertake by itself an enterprise as vast and difficult as a system of legislation? By themselves the people always will what is good, but by themselves they do not always discern it. The general will is always rightful, but the judgement which guides it is not always enlightened. It must be made to see things as they are, and sometimes as they should be seen; it must be shown the good path which it is seeking, and secured against seduction by the desires of individuals...Individuals see the good and reject it; the public desires the good but does not see it. Both equally need guidance. Individuals must be obliged to subordinate their will to their reason; the public must be taught to recognize what it desires. Such public enlightenment would produce a union of understanding and will in the social body, bring the parts into

> perfect harmony and lift the whole to its fullest strength. Hence the necessity of a lawgiver."[54]

Rousseau's fictional character, the Lawgiver, occupies the site of a tension in The Social Contract. For if the 'people' are supposed to be both the author of the 'general will', which formalises their sovereignty, and only then subjected to it, Rousseau also makes it clear that the 'people' as such must be formed by 'public enlightenment' in order for this to be the case. In other words, the 'people' both produce and are the product of the 'social contract'. They are, on the one hand, needed to institute the 'general will' and, as sovereign, employ the Lawgiver to draft its law, but, on the other, to be constituted by him in order to do so in the first place -the Lawgiver must in this case be ready to "change human nature, to transform each individual ...into a part of a much greater whole".[55] The Legislator is thus part of the Absolutist tradition, but also acts against it. However, the character is also a fiction, invented to overcome the aporia in Rousseau's attempt to historicize the mythical and revolutionary origin of the 'people' as sovereign. And this is the site occupied by El Supremo. It also constitutes his own drama: on the one hand, he writes in his 'Cuaderno Privado', "el pueblo me ha hecho su potestario supremo. Identificado con él, qué miedo podemos sentir ..."(180), whilst on the other, the function of his 'Circular Perpetua', like the 'Catecismo Patrio Reformador', is to ensure the formation of a 'people' with a commom knowledge of the nation's past and struggles for independence and freedom.[56] The Supreme Dictator is thus

"puesto al servicio de lo que domina"(47): impossibly identified with that which he is attempting to construct a civic and national identity for![57] In this sense, the place occupied by the Lawgiver and El Supremo is not (cannot be) one of identity but of <u>difference</u>. Paradoxically, however, it is from this very <u>difference</u> that the fiction of <u>identity</u> -the 'people' and their nation- emerges. And this, of course, is El Supremo's own 'Chimera'.

If we return briefly to the above passage glossed from <u>The Social Contract</u>, and compare it to the original, it is now possible to appreciate an important variation relevant to the story narrated in <u>Yo el Supremo</u>. Rather than the <u>law</u> acting to secure equality and freedom, as in Rousseau's text, El Supremo suggests that the Revolution, or more precisely, <u>he</u> ("Yo") would serve that same function. In other words, El Supremo steps in and usurps the 'rule of law'. He is the law(giver). Roa Bastos's own particular resolution in <u>Yo el Supremo</u> to Rousseau's theoretical problem is thus twofold. Firstly, a practical and Macchiavellian one: he unites in one person what in Rousseau's work are kept as distinctly separate functions: the Lawgiver and the Prince, thus combining Rousseauian theory with a Machiavellian practice (together they form "el gigantesco árbol" mentioned above).[58] Historically, this same Rousseauian tension was similarly 'resolved' in the Jacobinism of the French Revolution, most notably during the rule of the Committee of Public Safety led by Robespierre

who, like the majority of the members of the Constituent Assembly, and Dr. Francia before he became dictator of Paraguay, was himself a lawyer.[39] The context in which it was played out, furthermore, was the struggle against Absolutism for the imposition of new nation-states - precisely those revolutionary wars that Luckacs insists were one of the determining factors in the emergence of the historical novel when in his view, as we have seen, the experience of nationhood became the 'property of the people'. Thus, secondly, Roa Bastos frames El Supremo's story in this context too, obviously aware of the historical resonances of Rousseauian theory in the French Revolution, and has his dictator constantly refer to such figures as Robespierre and Napoleon as models for his own political project: "mi única nobleza es la chusma" he says paraphrasing the latter who, nevertheless, finally betrayed the republican cause: "Empequeñecido, derrotado después, por haber traicionado la causa revolucionaria de su país". "¿Qué otra cosa has hecho tú?"(45) retorts the 'mano desconocida' in the 'Cuaderno Privado'. In European terms, then, the novel evokes the political span of the French Revolution from Robespierre to Napoleon, and thinks through its relevance to post-independence Latin America and Paraguay.

Roa Bastos's gloss of Rousseau's text, therefore, provides the novel with (1) a political model in which to inscribe the story of El Supremo (as Lawgiver and Prince),

locating his drama within the context and dilemma constituted by the formation of a 'people'. In doing so it (2) furnishes the story with a particular set of political contents that foreground the republican tradition of subordinating the 'will of all' to the 'general will', that is, the economic to the political, which in turn (3) makes it relevant to the arguments concerning the origins of the modern state in general and more particularly, as we have seen, to the development of bourgeois nation-states in Latin America. This, (4) clarifies the particular form in which El Supremo (as Lawgiver) believed he embodied the enlightenment ideals of sovereignty, universal reason and the Absolute -here, the Rousseauian 'people' which he, nevertheless, betrays.[60] In this sense, (5) it is now possible to locate El Supremo's discourse: his words are, so to speak, the letter of the <u>law</u> (and the 'circular perpetua', his legacy).

But how did he embody these ideals? If we return to Rousseau's text describing the Lawgiver, the answer to this question becomes evident. It is because he had the power of interpretation. He can <u>see</u> what the people cannot: 'the good'. The 'people', on the other hand, are blind. The history of this competence is traced in <u>Yo el Supremo</u>, indeed it describes his rise to power: before he can dictate he must be able to read and interpret signs (to <u>see</u>).

We are told by the dictator in his 'cuaderno privado'

that as a child he read nature for its secrets:

> "Rechazado por los seres humanos y hasta por los animales, me metí en los libros. No en libros de papael; en libros de piedra, de plantas, de insectos disecados. Sobre todo las famosas piedras de Guayrá. Unas piedras muy cristalinas."(303)

With these stones, he relates, he had wanted to make the alchemic "piedra de las piedras: La piedra." (303) in his laboratory. He was not successful in this endeavour but, we find out later in the novel, he did manage to invent something 'much better':

> "Descubrí este rayo de rectitud perfecta atravesando todas las refracciones posibles. Fabriqué una prisma que podía descomponer un pensamiento en las siete colores del espectro. Luego cada uno en otros siete, hasta hacer surgir una luz blanca y negra al mismo tiempo, allí donde los que únicamente conciben lo doble-opuesto en todas las cosas, no ven más que una mezcla confusa de colores."(440)

This 'semiotic prism' -perhaps a parody of Greimas's 'semiotic rectangle'- is an instrumnt of decipherment enhancing the gaze and interpretative faculties of the dictator, ennabling him to read and impose order on thoughts, and to discover the basic semes -the minimum units of signification: black/white...etc.- constituting the deep binary structures that make signification possible.[61] It is this reading ability which, in giving El Supremo the power to see, makes posible his rise to power. Here, as reader of the sky -and it is from the sky that his power comes, in the shape of a captured meteor- he tells his civil and military functionaries -and us, as his readers- in the 'circular perpetua' that:

> "Comprendí entonces que sólo arrancando esta especie de hilo del azar de la trama de los acontecimientos es como puede hacerse posible lo imposible. Supe

que poder hacer es hacer poder. En ese instante un bólido trazaba una raya luminosa en el firmamento. Quién sabe cuántos millones de años había andado vagabundeando por el cosmos antes de apagarse en una fracción de segundo. En alguna parte había leído que las estrellas errantes, los meteoros, los aerolitos, son la representación del azar en el universo. La fuerza del poder consiste entonces, pensé, en cazar el azar; re-tenerlo atrapado. Descubrir sus leyes; es decir, las leyes del olvido. Existe el azar sólo porque existe el olvido. Someterlo a la ley del contra-olvido. Trazar el contra-azar."(107)

Everything must be readable, that is, forseeable. There are inscriptions everywhere to be decoded. El Supremo must find and take hold of the "hilo...de la trama", and decipher the stories that surround him. Hence the importance of certain technologies of vision such as El Supremo's telescope- 'lente-de-ver-lejos'- with which, once in power, he spies on his nation and reads the 'Libro de las Constelaciones', where he must continually keep an eye out for 'chance'. Indeed the end of his power (the 'fall') finally comes from the sky (above) -El Supremo is sucked into the mud (below)- in the form of a flock of blind birds that fall at his feet. He is then "Perdido en dos"(62, 451).

The importance of a specific competence combined with instrumental reason are underlined ("poder hacer es hacer poder"): knowledge is intimately associated with power and politics (the art of the possible, according to Aristotle) with optics. In true Machiavellian fashion, 'chance' ('fortune'), as represented here by the meteor must be captured in El Supremo's technologically enhanced gaze and dominated. Being able to read its traces in the sky, and

decipher its message, is thus fundamental to the dictator's power on earth -he must, and will, capture chance (the meteor) and chain it to his desk. Doing so will ensure his position, from where he can counter chance's 'writing' with his own. Thus El Supremo must not only be able to read, but also to write, so as to combat 'el azar', because interpretation is not enough if not re-encoded in writing: the dictator's own law must be 'traced', that is, dictated. This is so important for the dictator because chance has a subjective dimension too: forgetfulness. As Lawgiver, the dictator will have to dictate (his own) history ('trazar el contra-azar') so that it will not be forgotten, and thereby produce new 'enlightened' subjects, citizens aware of their past and the struggle for national independence -the cultural prerequisites of a sovereign and popular nation-state (that is, a sense of the 'socially general'). This history -the 'circular perpetua'- makes up a substantial part of the text, it is what the reader consumes too as El Supremo dictates it to his secretary Patiño. It is, however, too late, for the dictator is dead, his people still 'blind' (the birds) and his 'circular perpetua' the dictation of a dead man. However, as we have seen in Parts One and Two, El Supremo's discourse does address the future, where it may still have a function in the reader's present.

As told in the novel, the historical context of this acquisition of interpretative competence is that of a society emerging from a colonial province into the 'caos' of

post-colonialism. El Supremo tells his readers how he participated in these developments, but also how he distanced himself from them. He retires from the government twice -dissatisfied with the manouverings of the Junta and the creole military elite- and from his farm outside Asunción watches the post-colonial drama. To read and interpret 'correctly' needs the perspective -here El Supremo's perspective and distance reminds us of the author's own exile- from which the eye can read the signs from a privileged and individuated location -as if looking through a telescope. And, paradoxically, it is this distance that, at one and the same time, enables him to see and interpret (read) the 'general will' of the people, and bring him close to what he was 'looking for': the people and power:

> "Despierto ví esta visión de sueño. Mi almáciga de ratones se había convertido en una caravana de hombres. Yo caminaba delante de esa muchedumbre pululante. Arribamos a una columna de piedra negra, en la que un hombre estaba enterrado hasta las axilas...Clavado ahí, parecía que clamaba porque lo despetrifican. La caravana empujaba y chillaba detrás...Crucé la Plaza de Armas, seguido por un creciente gentío que vitoreaba mi nombre. Volví hecho otro hombre. En mi chacra-mangrullo de Ybyray había aprendido mucho. El retiro me había acercado a lo que buscaba. En adelante no transigiría con nada ni con nadie que se opusiese a la santa causa de la Patria...Autonomía, soberanía absoluta de mis decisiones. Formación, bajo mi jefatura, de las fuerzas necesarias para hacerlas cumplir. Exigí que se pusiera a mis órdenes la mitad del armamento y de las municiones existentes en los parques. De la gente-muchedumbre los hombres que formaron el primer plantel del ejército del pueblo. Apoyo aún más incontrastable que el de los cañones y fusiles en la defensa dela República y la Revolución."(178-179)

We have already noted the importance of Rousseau's text ideologically in providing Yo el Supremo with some of its

political and historical content. Furthermore, The Social Contract also provides the novel with a complex hero relevant to this politics, the Lawgiver, which defines the relationship of the dictator with the 'people'. Here we would seem to be in the presence of nothing less than the dictator's fantastic narrative dramatisation of his eventual rise to power as the consumation of the 'social contract' itself: rats become 'men' (the natural human species becomes explicitly social in constituting itself as a specific community through the 'social pact' and establishing the 'general will' over and above the 'will of all'[62]), and a new subject -before petrified- makes its appearance on the stage of political history: the 'people' as sovereign. With this 'pact' a new order is established: that of a Republic. Here, however, with the dictator (Lawgiver + Prince) at its head as the privileged interpreter of the 'general will', representing and indeed appropriating sovereign power. It is HE ('ÉL') who comes to power out of the flux of events. What is to be done?: "Armar en lo anárquico lo jerárquico." (107) -construct a new sovereign (independent) and popular state. It is, therefore, El Supremo's ability to read and interpret signs that gives him the power to represent (the 'people').

Returning to our quote summarising the story of the novel, I would like to make two points here. Firstly, at the level of 'content', we have arrived at its beginning, where, the dictator remembers., he laboured, read and

dictated under the signs of universal reason, the absolute and his own sovereignty (free fom tutelage). In other words, we have arrived at the stage in his history when he DICTATES. The dictator, of course, will still need to read, but weight will now be shifted away from the interpretation of signs to their ordering and dictation -to the production of discourse. He will be the privileged 'supreme' practitioner: rather than just 'interpreting the world', he will 'change it' in the name of the 'gente-muchedumbre'; on the other hand, we are not to witness the 'withering away of the state', as prefigured -according to Colletti- in the political philosophy of Rousseau, but its construction.[63]

Secondly, a related but more formal point, although hopefully substantively so. A minimal story is usually considered to be constituted by three basic events: the first and last by moments of stasis and synchronic order; the second tracing a process of change, disrupting the harmony of the first order and marking a diachronic path of temporal movement and transformation towards the third. At the general level of the narrative, as we have summarised it in the quote above and unravelled so far, we already find ,that in Yo el Supremo we are confronted by an inversion of this model: movement towards order which, we have been warned, is undermined by movement. That is, out of the flux -as the dictator sees it- of post-colonial Paraguay we are told about El Supremo's order which, in the end -as suggested by 'el punto'- is overtaken by the implication of

change (history).[44]

But, in the light of our argument so far, what does the dictator do? "Yo el Supremo Dictador de la República. Ordeno..."(7, my emphasis) are, as we have seen, the opening words of the novel, as they are of the 'pasquín' parodying the dictator's script and sentencing him and his functionaries to death or oblivion, informing readers right from its beginning about the dictator's role: it is an imperative one. There are basically three interrelated ways in which El Supremo orders and dictates: (a) politically -he is a republican Prince, (b) pedagogically or culturally -he occupies the centre of the nation's symbolic order, he is, as we have seen, the Lawgiver: "YO soy ese PERSONAJE y ese NOMBRE. Suprema encarnación de la raza. Me habéis elegido y me habéis entregado de por vida el gobierno y el destino de vuestras vidas. YO soy el SUPREMO PERSONAJE que vela y protege vuestro sueño dormido, vuestro sueño despierto..." (345)- and (c), in terms of a practice of writing. In what follows I shall briefly conclude my observations on modes (a) and (b), leaving (c) for Chapter Eight below.

As dictator, El Supremo is positioned in the hights of post-enlightenment politics -armed with his 'lente-de-ver-lejos' in the 'panoptic' Casa de Gobierno- from where he surveys his realm, reads the needs of the 'gente-muchedumbre' and defends the nation from foreign interests in their name -for, as we have seen, they cannot, indeed are

not equipped in El Supremo's (and Rousseau's) view, to represent themselves. In telling his story in the 'Circular Perpetua', the dictator also relates the constitution of a sovereign 'people'. But, in representing them, he effectively takes their place -his presence, as dictator, entails, like in linguistic representation, their absence- for they are not able to rule. He is, in other words, their political sign. The people are moreover -at least in his story- complicit in the production of this sign, in the re-emergence of the 'cizaña': having elected El Supremo perpetual dictator, the 'people' have given up that sovereignty which in republican thought lies solely with them.

Inside Paraguay, however, El Supremo uses his position to undermine the economic and cultural power of the "milicastros-terratenientes-mercaderes", who, he says, "Profetizaron convertir a este país en la nueva Atenas. Aerópago de las ciencias, las letras, las artes de este Continente. Lo que buscaban en realidad bajo tales químeras era entregar el Paraguay al mejor postor."(10). He puts his, and the 'peoples'' enemies, in prison, through the infamous 'Aposento de la Verdad', or even has them shot against the 'naranjo'. Under El Supremo's rule, the upper class suffer...and produce pamphlets and 'pasquines' (the primary sources for much of Paraguayan historiography). The dictator, for his part, responds with his own 'writing', putting a full-stop ('punto') to their 'plots' (so as to get

on dictating his own): "De repente el punto. Sacudida mortal de la parrafada. Quietud súbita del alud parrafal, de la salud de los pasquinistas. No el punto de tinta; el punto producido por un cartucho a bala en el pecho de los enemigos de la Patria es lo que cuenta. No admite réplica. Suena. Cumple."(70) It is this same 'point', of course, that eventually puts a full-stop to El Supremo's own dictation. With his reported death it is reported that the 'people' appreciated El Supremo's efforts on their behalf, and suffered his apparent demise. According to an official letter sent by the 'comandante de Villa Franca': "Todo era en rededor gemidos, sollozos, lamentos desgarradores. Muchos se arrancaban los cabellos con gritos de profundo dolor. Almas paraguayas en su máxima intensidad. Lo mismo la apreciable cantidad de hasta más de veinte mil indios que llegaron... a celebrar sus ceremonias funerarias... La agitación que se sintió sobrepasa toda descripción."(17) At the funeral service, says the Commander:

> "Se levantó un cúmulo de tres cuerpos revestidos de espejos. Ante él se colocó una mesa cubierta con los albos paños de los altares, que el padre cura cedió en préstamo por la señalada ocasión. Sobre una almohada de raso negro se cruzaban un bastón y una espada, distintivos del Poder Soberano. Estaba el cúmulo iluminado con 84 candelas, una por cada año de vida del Supremo Dictador. Muchos, por no decir todos, notaron su aparición entre los reflejos que se multiplicaban sin término a semejanza de su infinita protección paternal."(17)

With the death of the dictator, his sacralised image (the Chimera, or at least one of its more popular-religious sides) appears -is reproduced- with the aid of mirrors. El Supremo's comment is: "Lápida será mi ausencia sobre este

pobre pueblo que tendrá que seguir respirando bajo ella sin haber muerto por no haber podido nacer."(18) The effects of the illusion are, therefore, real and, as we saw in Part Two, the presence of El Finado in Paraguayan popular imaginaries -whose material needs have been so ignored since the government of Dr. Francia- lasting.

Despite the political desires of the leader of the Movimiento Campesino Paraguayo, Gabriel García, and the discourse of El Supremo, however, the absence in the novel of any kind of heroic or transcendental embodiment of the 'people' is striking. In Yo el Supremo Roa Bastos has not subordinated his literary work to any easily identifiable political logic -'popular' or not- but instead, dramatised the contradictions of a revolutionary dictatorship by working one side of the Rousseauian political structure occupied by the dictator (revolution) against the other (dictatorship). In sharp contrast to Hijo de Hombre, there are no Cristóbal Jara's or Macario's in the novel. The appearance of such popular characters have, rather, a transgressive or carnavalesque -rather than 'exemplary'- function. One such character is the unnamed 'labriego'. With the invasion of colonial Paraguay by the Argentine forces led by Belgrano, the 'gobernador' decides to flee:

"Para evitar ser reconocido cambió con un labriego su uniforme de brigadier por los andrajos de éste. Le regaló además sus anteojos y boquilla de oro. Dejó que los paraguayos se arreglaran como pudiesen."(116) The creole

leaders of the Paraguayan forces watch in awe as the 'gobernador' risks himself in battle, "desapareciendo por momentos y reapareciendo en otros como para infundir valor a las tropas...Se admiraron de las astucias, del coraje temerario, completamente insólito del gobernador, sin montura, tan bien disfrazado en ese hombre barbudo de tez obscura, manos callosas, pies descalzos." (117) The military chiefs manage, at last, to get the 'gobernador' behind the lines where he could be more easily consulted: "La muda presencia les contestaba con movimientos de cabeza mostrándoles siempre los recovecos del triunfo." Then a peasant appears, and the real 'gobernador' is unmasked. The military leaders then turn to the man (un)dressed as the GoveMor:

> "¿Y usted de dónde ha salido?, preguntan al campesino completamente desnudo, medio muerto de miedo. Yo... murmura el pobre hombre cubriéndose las vergüenzas con las manos. Yo vino... yo vino a mironear un poco el bochinche nomás."(117)

There are two points to be made with regard to this humorous episode: firstly, in momentarily donning the clothes of the representative of the royal Spanish sovereign in colonial Paraguay, the peasant, in carnavalesque fashion, turns the world up-side-down, signifying thus the emergence of a new sovereign subject. However, he does so -and this is the second point- inadvertently. Although he helps secure the victory of the Paraguayan forces, the event that inaugurates national independence is merely a 'bochinche', a spectacle in which he may participate, but which is of no real concern. For the 'labriego' the battle is anything but a

transcendental event. His political presence is, as the text (the 'circular perpetua') suggests, silent. The structure of this episode thus repeats that of The Social Contract. Although 'naturally' predisposed to sovereignty, the peasant is nevertheless 'blind' to its meaning -he is only 'unconsciously' free. El Supremo will, nevertheless, represent him, be his sign, and speak for him -and dictate so as to defend popular interest from the creole economic and military elites. In this sense, following the Rousseauian political tradition, El Supremo occup-ies that extremely problematic jacobin space of the political avant-garde, dictating for those who supposedly cannot -for whatever reason- govern for themselves. And this is what perhaps makes Yo el Supremo unique, for it dramatises in literary form both the origins of a state and the contradictions and mythologies of political representation in the context of revolution. This, I think, is the basic political structure of El Supremo's dictatorship.

In Hegel's view, there can be no genuine or successful revolution "without a Reformation" for, he says, "it is a false principle that the fetters which bind Right and Freedom can be broken without the emancipation of conscience ..."[65] In other words, socio-political transformation is not just a question of social structures, but a question of subjectivities too: revolution thus has an important cultural dimension. For Rousseau, as we have seen, the role of the Legislator is to produce such new political

subjectivities, specifically, the 'people' as citizens.

Pedagogically, El Supremo is also a dictator, he 'dicta clases', for example, the 'writing lesson' to his secretary Patiño (see below) -who is unable to adequately transcribe the real meaning of the dictator's voice (dictation). He also, as we have seen, dictates a 'history lesson': the 'circular perpetua' narrating the story of the Revolution is designed to make new subjects -his bureaucratic 'jefes'- imbued with a sense of national identity and political purpose. When drawing it to an end, he underlines its importance for the future of the nation: "Reflexionen pausadamente sobre estos puntos que constituyen el basamento de nuestra República. Focos de proyección de su progreso en el porvenir. Quiero jefes, delegados, administradores, aptos en sus diversas funciones. Quiero pundonor, austeridad, valor, honradez en cada uno de ustedes."(398) They are to follow his own virtuous example. He then informs them that there is to be a Congress so as to "fortalecer, uniformar, entre todos, la futura política del Supremo Gobierno"(398) in September. It is too late, however, for the dictator dies. It is at this point that El Supremo's dead dog Sultán, "sacudiéndose la tierra"(403) from his skull, returns from the dead too, to accuse him with the death of his servant 'el negro Pilar' -an ex-slave whose freedom was bought by the dictator-, and of betraying the 'people'. Sultán forces El Supremo to write about Pilar and the dictator agrees, for, he says "a la letra le da

igual que sea verdad o mentira lo que se escribe con ella"(407): El Supremo has thus become the 'secretary' of history.

Pilar was also the beneficiary of El Supremo's instruction: he recieves a 'reading lesson'. The dictator teaches his servant to read the skies (from which his own power came) with his 'telescopio' (an instrument of that power). The sky, in El Supremo's view, is also a mirror of souls. Pilar's reading lesson is, therefore, a lesson in 'almastromía' too: "En cada cosa hay oculto un significado. En cada hombre un signo", says the dictator. "¿Cuál es el suyo, Señor?", asks Pilar. "Capricornio"(408), he answers. After the lesson, El Supremo muses that "No llegará el negro a pasar de Capricornio. Su falsa inventiva lo clava en la irreverencia delatora."(409) And the dictator is right, although it is he that is at first 'clavado':

> "Una tarde, al volver del paseo, el pasmo me clavó en la puerta del despacho. Enfundado en mi uniforme de gala estaba el negro sentado a mi mesa dictando con destemplados gritos las más estrafalarias providencias a un escribiente invisible. Completamente borracho, hojea deshojando los expedientes amontonados... ¡Lo peor es que en la alucinación de mi cólera me veo retratado de cuerpo entero en ese negro! ¡Remeda a la perfección mi propia voz, mi figura, mis movimientos, hasta el menor detalle! Se levanta... Retira el grueso legajo que contiene los procesos de la Conspiración del año 20... vociferando insultos contra cada uno de los sesenta y ocho ajusticiados... No me ha sentido entrar. No repara en mi presencia. Al fin me ve... Salta sobre mí. Me arranca la chaqueta, me degarra la camisa. Me torea. Baila en torno de mí... Me arrincona, me acorrala contra el meteoro metiéndome en el cambaluz que está representando ese mono disfrazado de Supremo Dictador de una Nación. En un rápido giro se transforma ahora en cada uno de los sesenta y ocho ajusticiados. Son ellos los que

> ahora me insultan... me juzgan a mí, caído detras del piedrón... Sesenta y ocho voces de ultratumba en la sola atiplada voz del negro. Guardias!"(411-412)

Pilar's carnavalesque mimickry of El Supremo reveals that it was not necessary for him to be able to read beyond 'Capricornio', the dictator's sign. Indeed, in this case, El Supremo's reading lesson seems to have worked all too well, for Pilar was able to interpret his 'significado' and put it on show. In having at one and the same time occupied, parodied and judged the Lawgiver, however, Pilar is -unlike the silent 'labriego'- executed for his interpretative pains. El Supremo thus re-imposes his own power to judge. This 'point' ('punto') in El Supremo's dictation also, however, marks its end.

It is Sultán's -and not a peasant- voice that finally condemns El Supremo in the novel. In the dog's view "El negro Pilar fue el único ser libre..." (415) to live at the dictator's side: "Encontró todo el bien en lo que tú llamas todo el mal; de la línea del bajo vientre para abajo. ¿Es esa para ti la línea de flotación de lo que a cada rato llamas pomposamente razones de la Razón Universal?"(414) As we saw above, it was from "el imperio de la razón universal" that El Supremo thought he dictated. But then, he says, "De repente el punto". The 'point' here, of course, is the one that puts an end to Pilar's parodic discourse, to his own "parrafadas". It is also the one that marks the limits of Enlightenment rationality as El Supremo's radical political project runs aground on the very constituency it supposedly

represents (the fate, need it be said, of cultural enlightenment throughout Latin America).[66] In the end, says Sultán to the dictator:

> "...mantuviste a distancia al pueblo de quien recibiste la soberanía y el mando, bien comido, protegido, educado en el temor y la veneración, porque tú también en el fondo lo temías pero no lo venerabas. Te convertiste para la gente-muchedumbre en una Gran Obscuridad; en el gran Don-Amo que exige la docilidad a cambio del estómago lleno y la cabeza vacía."(454)

This accusation is not only a critique of El Supremo's version of the Rousseauian political project -"Te quedaste a mitad de camino y no formaste verdaderos dirigentes revolucionarios..."(454)- but also a suggestion that in his very betrayal of the 'people' he was instrumental in creating the Chimera that outlived him. Sultán even attacks the very competence that enabled El Supremo to dictate -his interpretative power, that is, his ability to read: "Leíste mal la voluntad del Común" says the dog, "y en consecuencia obraste mal.."(454) In the end, as El Supremo's micro-narrative of his political car-eer makes clear, it is he that is to be written by history and not the other way round. Sultán condemns him to having to return from the dead, to account ('contar') for his actions and respond to history (historiography): "A los otros se los comerá el olvido. Tú, ex Supremo, eres quien debe dar cuenta de todo y pagar hasta el último cuadrante..."(455) It is in compliance with this condemnation, in a sense, that the novel -El Supremo's discourse- begins.

CHAPTER EIGHT
FROM DICTATION TO COMPILATION

In contrast to the historical novel in Europe, as it has been theorised by Lukacs, Yo el Supremo suggests that in Paraguay the nation was not the 'self-creation' of the people, but rather of the state as embodied in the dictator. In his desire to impose a sense of national unity, El Supremo empties the state of its popular content. For this reason, one may add, Yo el Supremo constitutes a serious reflection on that paradox pointed out by Jesús Martín-Barbero concerning the post-independence states of Latin America (most of which boasted their republican credentials): "La paradoja halla su mejor expresión en el movimiento por el que la Nación al *dar cuerpo* al pueblo acaba *sustituyéndolo*."[67] (as we have seen, El Supremo confuses the nation with his own 'political' body -it breathes through his lungs.) In other words, the modern nation escapes the grasp of the 'people' and is appropriated by the state, only to be subsequently re-imposed on them as a unifying cultural project (by El Supremo, the Lawgiver). Thus, if we take Yo el Supremo -as Subercaseaux does- to be an example of a Latin American historical novel, our analysis above makes it possible to suggest that indeed it does portray the history of the constitution of a new 'order' by a state which has become the prime mover of -in this case, radical- political and cultural modernity (bourgeois society) in the area. This much, I think, is evident.[68] On the other hand, Yo el Supremo is not just a

historical novel in the same sense as those of Walter Scott, nor the kind of text theorised by Lukacs, for, written in the 1970's, it shares the 'self-consciousness' of narrative ordering (narration) typical of what has recently been called the post-modern 'historiographic metafiction'.[69] That is, it partakes -in particular contextualised ways, it must immediately be added- of developments in contemporary narrative form: it reflects on the very process of narration as it narrates. In this sense, I would like to suggest that Yo el Supremo stages its 'self-consciousness' as a confrontation between -at least- two kinds of narration or writing. It is to this conflict that I will turn below, concentrating on the writing practices of dictation and compilation -that is, the 'making' and 're-making' of history I referred to above.

Yo el Supremo concludes with a note by the Compiler. In it Roa Bastos informs the reader about the practices of compilation and dictation, and the composition of the novel. For this reason it is worth reproducing in its entirety:

> "Esta compilación ha sido entresacada -más honrado sería decir sonsacada- de unos veinte mil legajos, éditos e inéditos; de otros tantos volúmenes, folletos, periódicos, correspondencias y toda suerte de testimonios ocultados, consultados, espigados, espiados, en bibliotecas y archivos privados y oficiales. Hay que agregar a esto las versiones recogidas en las fuentes de la tradición oral, y unas quince mil horas de entrevistas grabadas en magnetófono, agravadas de imprecisiones y confusiones, a supuestos descendientes de supuestos funcionarios; a supuestos parientes y contraparientes de El Supremo, que se jactó siempre de no tener ninguno; a epígones, panegiristas y detractores no menos supuestos y nebulosos.
> Ya habrá advertido el lector que, al revés de los

> textos usuales, éste ha sido leído primero y escrito después. En lugar de decir y escribir cosa nueva, no ha hecho más que copiar fielmente lo ya dicho y compuesto y compuesto por otros. No hay pues en la compilación una sóla página, una sóla frase, una sóla palabra, desde el título hasta esta nota final, que no haya sido escrita de esta manera. "Toda historia no contemporánea es sospechosa", le gustaba decir a El Supremo. "No es preciso saber cómo han nacido para ver que tales fabulosas historias no son del tiempo en que se escribieron. Harta diferencia hay entre un libro que hace un particular y lanza al pueblo, y un libro que hace un pueblo. No se puede dudar que este libro es tan antiguo como el pueblo que lo dictó".
> Así imitando una vez más al Dictador (los Dictadores cumplen precisamente esta función: reemplazar a los escritores, historiadores, artistas, pensadores, etc.), el a-copiador declara, con palabras de un autor contemporáneo, que la historia encerrada en estos Apuntes se reduce al hecho de que la historia que en ella debió ser narrada no ha sido narrada. En consecuencia, los personajes y hechos que figuran en ellos han ganado, por fatalidad del lenguaje escrito, el derecho a una existencia ficticia y autónoma al servicio del no menos ficticio y autónomo lector."(467)

To begin with, then, let us look at the practice of dictation.

What does the Compiler mean when he says that the (hi)story that should have been narrated in the novel has not in fact been so?[70] Is he just making an epistemological point and foregrounding the different status of extra-discursive facts or events and their representation in discourse -such that all representations are necessarily mis-representations because they are not the same kind of 'thing'? This is, of course, the narrative terrain of the post-modernist 'historiographic metafiction'. And how would a reader experience a fact (like the political life of Dr. Francia) fully or transparently anyway if, as I have noted

above, they are only interpretable through their prior textual mediations? "¡Pásmense zonzos!" says El Supremo about the history he is writing, "Vean los límites. Las líneas divisorias de las aguas. El lado de aquí y el lado de allá de lo real."(269-270) Moreover, what is the difference -and this is the point of El Supremo's charge- between history and fiction if the dictator is able, as we have seen in Part Two, to constantly fictionalise the so-called 'facts' of history and re-historicise them in the story of Paraguayan independence he dictates (the 'circular perpetua').[71] I do not think that Roa Bastos' novel provides an epistemological answer to these questions. The problem of history thus posed is rather a matter of tracing the site of a productivity; that is, of the novel itself, its epistemologically subversive discourse (for example, of Chaves' 'scientific' historiography) and its own relationship to a particular ideological and cultural field -the Paraguayan palimpsest. The Compiler is, however, making a specific political point (indeed, as I have pointed out, it would seem that throughout the work the epistemological is almost always mediated by the political- how could it be otherwise in a 'dictatorship novel'?) He notes that one of the functions of the dictator is to take the place of writers, artists, historians etc., and that even in saying so he is in effect imitating "una vez más al Dictador". Indeed, in order to write the novel, and give its main character a voice, it was necessary for the author (as Compiler) to 'imitate' or copy him (mimesis), and thus

provide the reader with the illusion of a dictator endowed with a sense of presence and verisimilitude as dictator, and in so doing risk repeating the operation whereby the 'people', who El Supremo says he represents, are in fact made absent from the story (mis-representation). That is, in reproducing the dictator, the author may also reproduce the dictatorship's political and cultural exclusions too. In this sense, the author-as- Compiler also 'imitates' the absence-silence of the 'people' in the textual raw materials that conform his object (the Paraguayan palimpsest) -which, as we have seen, focalise their analyses almost exclusively on the dictator (Dr. Francia) at the expense of his 'popular' support. In other words, he is dictated to by his own subject matter- the myths of dictatorship. Could it be, then, that at the end of the novel the reader is told that the *literary (the Compiler) copies the political (the Dictator)*, and that it is the people's history of post-Independence Paraguay that remains untold, that authoring the novel somehow reproduces dictatorship? This, I think, is an implication, even though, as I attempted to show above, the mark of this absence -'el punto'- has, in the story, 'real' (carnavalesque) effects: the demise of El Supremo. The question that emerges, therefore, is whether the author-as-compiler of Yo el Supremo, like Miguel Vera in Hijo de Hombre and Silvestre in El sonámbulo is also -in 'imitating' or copying the dictator- somehow involved in an act of betrayal as well? Or, is it the case that, like in Pilar's carnavalesque mimicry, the author-as-compiler

transgresses the dictator's law -his dictation- too? Insofar as the writer of Yo el Supremo is both author and compiler, the answer may, I think, be both.

What is, therefore, the 'nature' of El Supremo's dictation? As we have seen, El Supremo's writing constitutes a radical and fantastic subversion of the kind of scientific historiography represented by such works as Chaves' El Supremo Dictador -and their fetishism of the written archival document: "En la historia escrita por publicanos y fariseos, éstos invierten sus embustes a interés compuesto. Las fechas para ellos son sagradas. Sobre todo cuando son erróneas. Para estos roedores, el error es precisamente roer lo cierto del documento. Se convierten en rivales de las polillas y los ratones. En cuanto a esta circular perpetua, el orden de las fechas no altera el producto de los fechos."(211) The 'circular perpetua' is El Supremo's attempt to redress the histories written about Dr. Francia, and to write his own based not only on the writings of those he considers his enemies but also on his own interpretation and appropriation of the 'popular will'. The dictator thus becomes the author of an alternative or counter-history. He is able, he claims, to "sujetar el tiempo"(210), that is, subject it to his own particular order:

> "Yo no escribo la historia. La hago. Puedo rehacerla según mi voluntad, ajustando, reforzando, enriqueciendo su sentido y verdad."(210-211)

El Supremo possesses a number of mechanical devices, like

the 'lente-de-ver-lejos' and the 'semiotic prism', which function as aids to his interpretative power. He has also entrapped chance -the meteor- and chained it to his desk, making it possible for him to "Trazar el contra-azar". And with regard to history, the dictator is assisted by a 'portapluma- recuerdo': "Surge del portapluma-recuerdo otra recepción que daré al enviado de Brasil, quince años más tarde. Puedo permitirme el lujo de mezclar los hechos sin confundirlos. Ahorro tiempo, papel, tinta, fastidio de andar consultando almanaques, calendarios..."(210) The dictator's disdain for the archive -and his desacralisation of the date as an organising principle of historical narrative- is therefore functional to the economy ("ahorro tiempo") of his power. The 'portapluma-recuerdo' enables him to organise time and events for his own paternalistic purpose. In his narrative, the articulation of time and events functions to express a particular <u>meaning</u> -which can only be deciphered and re-encoded in narrative form from a position of future knowledge, for example, the dictator's death (or the author's present)- and not merely document a series of 'facts'. In this case he superimposes and condenses the visits of two foreign emissaries, separated by a period of twenty-five years, into one episode so as to illustrate a synchronic continuity in his rule: to defend the newly independent nation from the 'desire' of its neighbours. El Supremo's history thus privileges national political significance over and above the <u>apparent</u> neutrality of facts (see the section on Chaves above), and

is thus intimately articulated to his own interpretative skills and political mastery of events:

> "Yo soy el árbitro. Puedo decidir la cosa. Fraguar los hechos. Inventar los acontecimientos. Podría evitar guerras, invasiones, pillajes... En todo caso la cachiporra me pertenece... digo esta pluma con el lente-recuerdo incrustado en el pomo."(213-214)

In effect, El Supremo, as the embodiment of the state, is a veritable semiotic machine; he never stops speaking-dictating, and ordering and re-ordering history. His words (dictation) are, for this reason, 'order-words'. Firstly, because he imposes his own <u>order</u> (grammar) on history, producing both a narrative that runs against the grain of established historiography and, more positively, an alternative national history representing popular interests (apparently very much appreciated by the imprisoned students mentioned by Roa Bastos above). His words are also 'order-words' in a second sense. They are <u>instrumental</u>, and inscribed into the logic of El Supremo's immediate political concerns -they trace the unfolding of a modern political project (the creation of a nation-state). For this reason we should remember that El Supremo is also the proud owner of the 'pluma-fusil' -which, with his demise, he hands over to Maria de los Angeles and the new politics she represents- with which he can put an end to his enemies' 'plots' with immediate concrete effects...'el punto'. His words are thus 'armas' ('fusil') and 'letras' ('pluma'). And with them he writes-makes history ('recuerdo'), 'pummelling' it into shape with his 'cachiporra':

> "Los dos carruajes ruedan juntos a la inversa. La mitad hacia adelante, la mitad hacia atrás. Se separan. Se rozan. Rechinan los ejes. Se alejan. El tiempo está lleno de grietas. Hace agua por todas partes."(214)

It is almost as if, in their very effectivity, the dictator's words ('armas y letras') constitute part of the state's repressive apparatus![72]

In Yo el Supremo, therefore, the reader is presented with the very process of dictation, that is, the production of the dictated. Hence the appearance of such phrases as "Tacha esa palabra que todavía no se usa". It is as if one were reading a recording of that very moment located between El Supremo's dictatorial speech and his secretary Patiño's transcription.[73] The dictator is, therefore, a dictator in this sense too, he dictates words -in his office, and to his secretary. The words of the text pronounced by the dictator dramatise (and mimic) the very act of dictation itself; an act which is constituted in that space lying somewhere between writing and speech -that is, a speech in the very moment of becoming writing, and a writing that is just leaving speech. Theodor Adorno has made the following remarks about this dictatorial space:

> "Dictating is not only more comfortable, more conducive to concentration, it has an additional substantive benefit. Dictation makes it possible for the writer, in the earliest phase of production, to manoeuvre himself into the position of critic. What he sets down is tentative, provisional, mere material for revision, yet appears to him, once transcribed, as something estranged and in some measure objective. He need have no fear of committing something inadequate to paper, for he is not the one who has to write it: he outwits responsibility in its interests... But thanks are

> due to the person taking down the dictation, if at the right moment he pulls up the writer by contradiction, irony, nerviosity, impatience and disrespect. He incurs wrath, so diverting it from the store of bad conscience with which otherwise the writer would mistrust his own work and therefore dig in his heels all the more defiantly over his supposedly sacred text. The emotion that turns ungratefully on his troublesome helper, benignly purifies his relation to his subject."[74]

Framed by the relationship between El Supremo and Patino, this gap between dictation and the dictated provides Yo el Supremo with the space for its reflections on the relationship between speech and writing. Indeed, as I have noted, Patiño continuously incurs the wrath of El Supremo for not being able to decipher the identity of the author of the 'pasquín' (all indications are that it was El Supremo himself), for interrupting his dictation with stories (the only sign of the secretary's autonomy), and for his perceived inability to transcribe the dictator's speech -his 'order-words'- correctly: "Le cuesta a Patiño subir la cuesta del contar y escribir a la vez; oír el son-ido de lo que escribe; trazar el signo de lo que escucha. Acordar la palabra con el sonido del pensamiento que nunca es un murmullo solitario por más intimo que sea..."(23), writes El Supremo in his 'Cuaderno Privado'. As we have seen, for the dictator (as 'critic') writing should, in some sense, be an event, and 'happen' in the same way as an oral utterance in conversation... or indeed, dictation. Patiño cannot, however, reproduce the cultural experience of orality in his writing; nor, on the other hand, can he destroy it: "No has arruinado la tradición oral sólo porque es el único lenguaje que no se puede saquear, robar, repetir, plagiar, copiar"-

all signs of corruption in El Supremo's view- "Lo hablado vive sostenido por el tono, los gestos, los movimientos del rostro, las miradas, el acento, el aliento del que habla."(49)

These are important passages from Yo el Supremo, for they bring the words of the dictator in the novel into contact with two very different kinds of intertext: on the one hand, the predominantly oral character of popular culture in Paraguay, and on the other, the history of Western metaphysics as described by Jacques Derrida.[75] I have already noted the importance of the former for the novel: although recognising the popularity of Dr. Francia amongst the Paraguayan peasantry, the fact that this social class did not leave the kinds of inscriptions readable for conventional, that is 'scientific', historiography, has meant that their 'voice' has remained absent from the Paraguayan historical record. It is these 'people', as we have seen, that El Supremo claims he represents. This is because they cannot represent themselves. In articulating his parodic critique of historio-graphy he thereby redeems popular 'silence' and incorporates it into the historical record as the ignored basis and 'voice' of his political support (the 'cuaderno privado'). It is this political alignment between the 'people' and El Supremo that his dictation (his voice) is supposed to express. The problem remains, however, that Patiño cannot capture this voice in writing.

On the other hand, in El Supremo's discourse, this complex cultural context of speech in Paraguay (constituted by a whole series of linguistic conflicts between a variety of languages, including the dominant Spanish[76]) becomes transformed -and 'purified' in Adorno's words- into the sacred place of an indestructible origin -fully present (i.e. transparent) to itself, but not to the writer -in other words, a self-contained cultural <u>absolute</u> in relation to which writing can only be 'supplementary' -an 'other'. It is in this context that El Supremo decides to give Patiño a 'writing lesson'.[77] He wants to overcome this disjuncture with the production of a mythical writing which, furthermore, in capturing the 'absolute' (the people), legitimises his power by articulating the voice of "los voquibles"(59). What it is important to bare in mind, therefore, is that these cultural and philosophical intertexts are significantly mediated by another <u>political</u> text: that belonging to a dictatorial /revolutionary state- El Supremo.

As the representative of the 'people' and 'orality' El Supremo also wants to be fully present in writing (and make the objective, subjective):

> "Lo que te pido, mi estimado Panzancho, es que cuando te dicto no trates de artificializar la naturaleza de los asuntos sino de naturalizar lo artificioso de las palabras. Eres mi secretario ex-cretante. Escribes lo que te dicto como si tú mismo hablaras por mí en secreto al papel. Quiero que en las palabras que escribes haya algo que me pertenezca." (65)

Thus a chain of equivalents begins to become evident in El

Supremo's discourse linking the dictator with the 'people' and nature through speech. El Supremo wants to ground his writing in nature (the voice of the 'people'). In the 'writing lesson' El Supremo offers Patiño his hand in "un simulacro de transitoria identificación"(63) and then guides him in the sexual activity of writing. The first thing they write is not 'el pueblo', whom they are supposed to represent, but rather "YO EL SUPREMO" -the people's political sign. They continue; and then we witness the origins -the 'natural' birth- of writing. It begins -as it will end- with 'el punto' (and, of course, women):

> "El punto. El pequeño punto está ahí. Sentado sobre el papel. A merced de sus fuerzas interiores. Grávido de cosas. Buscan procrearse en la palpitación interior. Quiebran la cáscara. Salen piando. Se sientan sobre la costra blanca del papel...He ahí el punto. Semilla de nuevos huevos." (68)

El Supremo then immediately locks this myth of natural writing -associated with femininity- into the -patriarchal- logic of a state power legitimised by 'el pueblo' and nationalism[78]:

> "Origen de la escritura: El Punto. Unidad pequeña. De igual modo que las unidades de la lengua escrita o hablada son a su vez pequeñas lenguas... Del mismo modo el Poder Absoluto está hecho de pequeños poderes... El Supremo es aquel que lo es por su naturaleza. Nunca nos recuerda a otros salvo a la imagen del Estado, de la Nación, del pueblo de la Patria."(69)

And it is out of this scene of writing, finally, that El Supremo's dictation emerges: the 'circular perpetua'. He describes it as "La Naturaleza enroscada en una espiral-perpetua."(69) -that is, like a fetus (nation) to which he gives birth. His history, and his dictation, thus becomes

naturalised.

Although El Supremo equates writing with corruption -"La suciedad, la excrementicidad..."(59) he nevertheless needs it so as to dictate (and write in his own 'cuaderno privado'). This is because dictation is a speech articulated <u>for</u> writing -an 'écriture-avant-la-lettre' as Derrida mights say- and thus contains the latter in its very logic of production: El Supremo speaks so that Patiño can write. In this sense, it may be that the above myth of the natural origins of writing functions to <u>cleanse</u> -and naturalise- the latter of its 'suciedad', and in some 'hopeful' sense close that gap -in a momentary "simulacro de ...identificación"- constituted by the relation between El Supremo and Patiño, speech and writing, dictation and dictated. El Supremo's sustained fantasy of naturalising the artificial in the 'writing lesson' is, however, only an episode, and throughout the rest of the work El Supremo continues to harass Patiño for his writerly inadequacies; the gap -that is, differal and difference (the trace of an unnatural writing)- re-emerges. And finally, of course, as we have seen, 'el punto' also reasserts itself, this time in death (including Patiño's).[79]

The question of dictatorship in <u>Yo el Supremo</u> is thus far from a simple matter. All the above illustrates the complex multiplicity of intertwined strategies deployed by El Supremo to bolster his 'order-words': myth (of a natural

writing), politics (the representation of -the voice of- the 'people'), parody (the epistemological subversion of 'scientific' historiography) and finally, of course, counter-history. Moreover, although I have foregrounded questions of state power, the dictator is in no way merely portrayed as the embodiment of evil or pro-imperialist conservativism, as in the majority of dictatorship novels.[80] The text's stubborn ambiguity in this regard makes any easy condemnation of El Supremo -positioned as he is on both sides of the revolution/ dictatorship opposition in the period of Latin American independence- almost impossible: he is, as we have seen, at one and the same time an absolutist 'cizaña' and its enlightenment (or jacobin) critique. That is, a Lawgiver and Prince.

But how does the text of Yo el Supremo position the writer in relation to this complex dictatorial system? There are two principal organising narrative instances in the novel: the Compiler and El Supremo, and the relation between them may be characterised as one of identity (mimesis) and difference.[81] As noted above, the Compiler suggests in the final note that throughout the work he has imitated the dictator. Indeed, in another important note, situated not at the foot of a page but in the main body of the text, the Compiler relates how he actually came into possession of the dictator's 'portapluma-recuerdo'. He was given it by Raimundo Loco-Solo, "el cuarto nieto de Policarpo Patiño", on his deathbed, just before the "Éxodo

que comenzó en marzo de 1947."(216) -when Roa Bastos left Paraguay. The Compiler -called Carpincho in the note, that is, the author's nickname as a child- had always desperately wanted the pen:

> "Me has rondado, me has sitiado, me has ayudado a morir con una paciencia más porfiada que el amor. Pero el amor no es más que amor. Tu deseo es otra cosa. Ese deseo, no de lo que soy sino de lo que tengo, te ha encadenado a mí. Ha hecho de vos un esclavo..."(217)

For his obsession, Loco-Solo condemns the Compiler before he leaves the country: "Te esperan malos tiempos, Carpincho. Te vas a convertir en migrante, en traidor, en desertor. Te van a declarar infame traidor a la patria." (217) The Compiler is, therefore, not only the composer of, but also a character in, Yo el Supremo, moved by his desire to possess and write with the dictator's powerful pen. In the novel he reproduces El Supremo's dictatorship, and in yielding narrative en-unciation to the dictator becomes him, momentarily, in the actual process of writing (as does the reader in the moment of reading the work). This compositional gesture, in which El Supremo is endowed with the power to en-unciate in the first person, and thereby produce his own commentary, makes the dictator the object- for the Compiler (as author)- of mimesis rather than exegesis. For his part, as if in an act of exchange, the inventor of El Supremo gives the dictator all the powers (authority) of an author -with which he can, as we have seen, narrate the creation of a nation-state and represent the 'people'.[82]

The Compiler's desire for writing-power is, however, dashed. For he, unlike the dictator, cannot and does not represent. Nor is he just an author(ity) figure, but a compiler too. When the 'portapluma-recuerdo' belonged to El Supremo it was, he tells us, "un insólito utensilio con dos diferentes aunque coordinadas funciones":

> "Escribir al mismo tiempo que visualizar las formas de otro lenguaje compuesto exclusivamente con imágenes, por decirlo así, de *metáforas ópticas*... al modo de lo que hoy conocemos como proyección cinematográfica. Pienso que en otro tiempo la pluma debió también estar dotada de una tercera función: reproducir el espacio fónico de la escritura, el texto sonoro de las imágenes visuales; lo que podría haber sido el *tiempo hablado* de esas palabras sin formas, de esas formas sin palabras, que permitió a El Supremo conjugar los tres textos en una cuarta dimensión intemporal girando en torno al eje de un punto indiferenciado entre el origen y la abolición de la escritura..."(214-215)

El Supremo's myth of writing -and 'el punto'- thus reappears. Here, in the Compiler's description of the technical properties of the 'portapluma-recuerdo'. According to the latter, El Supremo's script is able to fully re-present its objects through the pen's visual and phonic functions, and constantly re-enact the space lying between "el origen y la abolición de la escritura". In El Supremo's hands the 'portapluma-recuerdo' does not, unlike Patiño's transcription, mis-represent. In effect, it is able to "Recoge(r) los gritos, los ruidos, las voces de los armadores, de los artesanos, el brillo aceitoso del sudor de los operarios negros"(219) The dictator can thus fully re-present the very three-dimensionality of the 'gente-muchedumbre''s lives. In the hands of the Compiler, however, the 'portapluma-recuerdo' has lost its functions:

> "...el portapluma-recuerdo hoy sólo escribe con trazos muy gruesos que rasgan el papel borrando las palabras al tiempo de escribirlas, proyectando sin cesar las mismas imágenes mudas, despojadas de su espacio sonoro."(215)

He cannot, therefore, represent in the same way as El Supremo. The story of the pen not only traces a continuity between the dictator and the Compiler, but also, as the above passage suggests, a radical discontinuity too. If in his final note the Compiler informs us that he imitates the dictator and dictates, here, with regard to techniques of writing, the Compiler foregrounds an important difference. The author-as-*compiler* is socially positioned -politically (he does not possess the dictator's power), spatially (in exile he cannot hear the 'voice' of the Paraguayan people but only read their texts[83]) and temporally (he inhabits a different historico-cultural time)- in completely different ways from El Supremo; the result being, from the point of view of the story of the 'portapluma-recuerdo', that his writing does not stand in the same relation of alignment to vision and sound as the dictator's. The Compiler, therefore, does not/cannot represent the 'people'. Indeed, the major difference here is that, as an organising instance of the novel, the function of the Compiler is not to represent at all -as he writes in the final note quoted above, he rather gathers, assembles and glosses pre-formed discursive materials, the words of others.[84] The text was, he says, "leído primero y escrito después". The story of the 'portapluma-recuerdo' is important, therefore, because it maps out, within the text itself, the diference between

dictation and compilation as narrative modes, the ability and inability to represent (both linguistically and politically). Furthermore, by showing how the Compiler simultaneously can and cannot imitate the dictator, it also incorporates into the artwork the 'self-consciousness' of narrative composition I referred to above (the possibility and impossibility of (mis)representation).

I have looked at the question of dictation (political, pedagogical and as a practice of writing) in some detail. But what about compilation? What does the Compiler do? Firstly, as I have pointed out, the Compiler provides the vantage point from which El Supremo's discourse may address the future -his present- and its texts: the political and cultural contexts of contemporary Argentina (the rise of Left Peronism) and Paraguay (the myths of 'el supremo dictador' -the hybrid Chimera). Secondly, he also makes dictation possible: El Supremo is able to 'make' an alternative parodic history, for example, thanks to the Compiler's re-reading and fictionalisation of the historical record -the texts of Mitre and Chaves, amongst others. Finally, as we have also seen, the Compiler organises the disposition of the textual surface of the novel in such a fashion as to break down, interrupt and subvert El Supremo's own history of the origins of the nation-state -in other words, he breaks up the dictator's narrative law.

Roa Bastos has described the labour and social

significance of compilation -located in Buenos Aires, 207 years after the birth of Dr. Francia in Paraguay- in the following way (and in doing so, explains the first part of the final note):

> "El autor compilador se limita a reunir, coleccionar y acumular materias de otros textos, que a su vez fueron sacados o variados de otros. Lo hace a sabiendas de que no 'crea', de que no saca algo de la nada. Trabaja las materias últimas de lo que ya está dado, hecho, escrito, dicho. Estas son sus materias primas...En la sociedad capitalista en la que el robo organizado científica y técnicamente es la base del sistema... el compilador roba, saquea, se apropia de lo ajeno... Por eso su actitud depredadora en los cotos privados de la cultura es la de un cazador furtivo ...el de un francotirador que actúa por su cuenta."[85]

Roa Bastos thus makes it abundantly clear that he developed the idea and practice of compilation out of a critique of the capitalist commodification and appropriation of intellectual labour and culture (the 'culture industry') -a process he experiences in a particularly heightened form:

> "El escritor, el artista, este señor, este artesano medieval, está encerrado modernamente en la antigua 'muralla china' de la ideología burguesa llegada a sus formas extremas de alienación y coacción: el imperialismo económico y político."[86]

In this context of the abstract unification of intellectual labour as cultural capital, he argues, to speak of the author as a 'creador' is an absurdity. This is because, as the above passage suggests, "...no existe ya para el lenguaje un solo espacio libre en que se puede inventar libremente..."[87] Furthermore, the predicament of cultural production in a world increasingly subordinated to the logic of the market, reveals, in Roa Bastos' view, the ideological content and redundancy of the whole notion of the author

"que ...'crea'...algo de la nada." Like the capital of the bourgeoisie, the 'creations' of authors are, rather, social, and presuppose "materias de otros textos, que a su vez fueron sacados o variados de otros." The function of the compiler on this theoretical level is, therefore, to recover the sociality of literary production: the author is not a point of origin, but the mediator of pre-given texts and experiences. As the 'mano desconocida' says to El Supremo in the margins of his 'cuaderno privado': "Uno siempre se equivoca; la verdad comienza de dos en más..."(109).

It is at this point that we may return to the hypothesis set out in Chapter Six, and my observations on the particular forms of development of bourgeois society in Latin America; that is, its experience as being predominantly <u>political</u> and the work of the state rather than civil society or the market. The dictator in <u>Yo el Supremo</u>, the supreme 'autor creador' of the nation -who can "sujetar el tiempo" and make history- possesses a 'Cuaderno Privado' which is, in fact, the Compiler tells us, the bourgeois text *par exœllence*: a profit and loss account. This 'cuenta' is thus the <u>invisible</u> support of the dictator's 'cuento':

> "Libro de comercio de tamaño descomunal...apenas empezado a usar en los asientos de cuentas reales, aparecieron otros irreales y crípticos...había asentado en estos folios, inconexamente, incoherentemente, hechos, ideas, reflexiones...los que a su juicio eran positivos en la columna del Haber; los negativos, en la columna del Debe. De este modo, palabras, frases, párrafos, fragmentos,

> se desdoblan...en ambas columnas en procura de un imaginario balance. Recuerdan en cierta form, las notaciones de una partitura polifónica..."(22-23)

In this way bourgeois society, in the literary form of a profit and loss account (private interest), only makes itself visible in the political armature to which it is subordinated, that is, in the form -or the discourse- of the state . And for this reason, what the Compiler theorises as the solitary practice of breaking the laws of the international capitalist cultural market becomes, once inscribed as a practice into the (Latin American/ Paraguayan) novel itself, the compilatory transgression of the word -the law- of El Supremo; that is, of the <u>state</u> as literary character.

The Compiler, therefore, simultaneously betrays the 'people' -he 'is' El Supremo (the dictator)- and subverts the law of the state -he 'is' 'el negro Pilar' (and Sultán, and María de los Angeles...). Finally, this means that the literary does and does not 'copy' the political in <u>Yo el Supremo</u>. Although the Compiler <u>does</u> possess El Supremo's 'portapluma-recuerdo', he <u>does not</u> dispose of its mythical representational powers. And this crucial difference between their respective writerly practices is given in the Compiler's comparison of the dictator's pen with a filmic text: having lost his ability to reproduce visual and phonic signs, he is, nevertheless, left with the most basic of cinematic techniques, <u>montage</u> -with which he may gather, edit, re-assemble and fictionally gloss the pre-given

materials of culture sedimented in the political palimpsest and/or the "muralla china" of bourgeois culture.

In this literary context, the writer is able to subject the political (dictatorship) to his own compositional logic, break El Supremo's attempt to naturally align himself with the 'people' (the political logic of populism) and, in re-asserting their autonomy, re-assert the text's own.

NOTES

1. Pierre Clastres, Society Against the State, Zone Books, New York, 1989, pp. 214, 215, 217.

2. See A. Roa Bastos' "Introducción" to Augusto Roa Bastos (comp.), Las culturas condenadas, Siglo Veintiuno, Mexico, 1978.

3. Ibid., p. 217-218.

4. See Hélène Clastres, La Terre Sans Mal. Le prohétisme Tupi-Guarani, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1975, especially the discussion of the resistance led by the 'chiefs' Obera and Guiravera in Chapter 3, "Le discours de prophetes et ses effets", pp. 65-103.

5. Op. cit., p. 206. In this sense, neither the Inca nor the Aztec civilisations would be considered 'primitive' societies.

6. Hélène Clastre, Op. cit., p. 55.

7. One migration of this kind that took place in the mid-Fifteenth Century is thought to have resulted in the Chiriguano (Guaraní) tribe's eventual settlement on the frontiers of the Inca Empire. See Georg Grunberg and Friedl Grunberg, "Los Guaraníes Occidentales", in Augusto Roa Bastos (comp.), Op. cit., pp. 178-193.

8. Ibid., p. 49-50.

9. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces", Diacritics, Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring, 1986, p. 24.

10. See Bartomeu Meliá's excellent El guaraní conquistado y reducido, Universidad Catolica, Asuncion, 1986.

11. The questions that emerge at this point are extremely complex: who are these 'pueblos indígenas' and these 'tribus hostiles'? What is being referred to here, I think, may be the conflict between the idea that 'lo Guaraní' forms an integral part of national culture, whereas the native Indian groups of the Chaco in Western Paraguay ('el desierto') do not. For this reason, dominant national culture has usually been thought of in relation to cultures inhabiting Eastern Paraguay alone. In effect, the Guaraní language itself has been used as a means of incorporating non-Guaraní Indians into, firstly, the Jesuit Missions, and later, national culture. See Ramón César Bejerano, ¿Genocidio en el Paraguay?, Editorial Toledo, Asunción, 1974: "Estamos convencidos que los Guayaki desaparecerán alguna vez como entidad étnica, y por los mismos motivos que causaron la desaparición de muchas otras, entre ellos los Mbaya y los

Paraguá. Y los descendientes de los Guayaki actuales, como ahora los Mbaya y Paraguá (que ya olvidaron hasta el idioma de sus antepasados), también dirán orgullosos: ¡'SOMOS PARAGUAYOS, descendientes de guaraníes y españoles'! En este mismo momento, los descendientes de otras parcialidades no guaraní se sienten y dicen que son guaraníes...Todo es cuestión de TIEMPO, ese gran factor homogeneizador.", p. 35. Bejerano was in charge of the National Indigenist Institute in Paraguay during Stroessner's regime. The TIME referred to here, of course, is that of the State. Unfortunately, these kinds of conflicts have not been taken into account in the few anthropological readings of Yo el Supremo that exist, for example, Martin Lienhard's "Apuntes sobre los desdoblamientos, la mitología y la escritura en 'Yo el Supremo'", Hispamérica, 19, 1978.

12. Alejo Carpentier, El recurso del método, Siglo XXI editores, Buenos Aires, 1974; Gabriel García Márquez, El otoño del patriarca, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1975. There were also many others. See Julio Calviño Iglesias, La novela del dictador en Hispanoamérica, Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, Madrid, 1985.

13. See Hernán Vidal, "Hacia un modelo general de la sensibilidad social literaturizable bajo el fascismo", in Hernan Vidal (ed.), Fascismo y experiencia literaria: reflexiones para una recanonización, Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literature, Prisma Books, Minneapolis, 1985; René Jara and Hernán Vidal (eds.) Testimonio y literatura, Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literature, Prisma Books, Minneapolis, 1986.

14. See Mario Benedetti, "El recurso del supremo patriarca", Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana, No. 3, 1976; Rubén Bareiro Saguier, "La novela de la dictadura en Latinoamerica", El País, 15 January, 1978; Carlos Pacheco, Narrativa de la dictadura y crítica literaria, Ediciones CELARG, Fundación Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos, Caracas, 1987.

15. For the Jungian explanation, see Martha L. Canfield, El 'Patriarca' de García Márquez: arquetipo literario del dictador hispano-americano, Universidad de Florencia, Firenze, 1984; for the Freudian, Gerald Martin, "'El Señor Presidente'. Una lectura contextual", in El Señor Presidente, Edicion Crítica de las Obras Completas, Editions Klincksieck, Paris, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1977, p. LXXXVII; and for the (unacknowledeged) Lacanian, Angel Rama, Los dictadores latinoamericanos, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1976, pp. 9-12. See also, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience", in Jacques Lacan, Op. cit..

16. From another perspective -the recognition of the evident existence of popular religion in Latin America- Jacques Lafaye has the following to say about the area's political culture: "Será que la conciencia popular latinoamericana tiene todavía otros modelos, distintos resortes que si bien la hacen relativamente accesible a los slogans elaborados en otro contexto cultural, también la hacen altamente acogedora al mensaje del mesías que sepa captar su confianza. Donde hubo líder carismático -como en el caso de Eva Perón en la Argentina y en el de Fidel Castro en Cuba- el movimiento popular tuvo ambiente de epifanía revolucionaria...Por lo común el hombre hispánico...se levanta por su fé religiosa o porque se ha herido su sensibilidad, no por un principio. Ante todo, los pueblos latinoamericanos no se guían por una doctrina -que les tiene sin cuidado-, se dejan fascinar por un caudillo-mesías.", Mesías, cruzadas, utopías. El judeo-cristianismo en las sociedades ibéricas, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1984, p.24. The idea that people may make history, even if not in circumstances of their own choosing, has disappeared here in a religious mist astounding for its dismissal of much of the area's history, complex relations of power, and highly synchretic cultures.

17. "Dans le cadre des rapports entre roman et societé dans l'Amérique de langue espagnole le thème 'Caudillos, caciques, et dictateurs' présente un double avantage: il permet conjointement d'étudier l'histoire d'un genre et celle d'un phénomène social; et cela presque dés les origines du genre (Amalia est de 1852) jusqu'á nos jours.", Paul Verdevoye, in his pesentation of "Caudillos", "Caciques" et Dictateurs dans le roman Hispano-Américain, Editions Hispaniques, Paris, 1978, p. 9.

18. Bernardo Subercaseaux, "'Tirano Banderas' en la narrativa hispanoamericana (la novela del dictador 1926-1976)", Anales de la Universidad de Cuenca, Tomo XXXIII, Abril, 1978, p. 81.

19. Georg Lukacs, The Historical Novel, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1981.

20. Ibid., pp. 404, 401-402, 402.

21. Ibid., p. 20-21, 22, 31.

22. Ibid., pp. 34, 32, 35, 37.

23. Ibid., p. 40.

24. G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of Right, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1967; Karl Marx, "The Jewish Question" in Early Writings, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1977.

25. Noé Jitrik, "De la historia a la escritura: predominios, disimetrías, acuerdos en la novela histórica latinoamericana", in Daniel Balderston (ed.) The Historical Novel in Latin America. A Symposium, Ediciones Hispamérica, Tulane University, Gaithesburg, 1986, pp. 13-29.

26. Ibid., p. 17.

27. Ibid.

28. Gabriel García Márquez's recently published historical novel about Simón Bolívar, El general en su laberinto, Mondadori, Madrid, 1989, would seem to underline this fact.

29. José Carlos Mariátegui, Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana, Obras Completas Vol. 2, Biblioteca Amauta, Lima, 1978, p. 34 (my emphasis).

30. For critics such as Antonio Cornejo Polar, Alejandro Losada and Angel Rama, this would be the case for their heterogeneous 'national' literatures too. See Antonio Cornejo Polar, Literatura y sociedad en el Perú: la novela indigenista, Editora Lasontay, Lima, 1980; Alejandro Losada, "La internacionalización de la literatura latinoamericana", Caravelle. Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, No. 42, 1984; Angel Rama, La transculturación narrativa en América Latina, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1982. Unfortunately, I am not able to foreground the cultural dimensions of this with regard to Paraguay here.

31. Norberto Lechner, La crisis del estado en América Latina, El Cid Editores, Caracas, 1977, p. 39, 74 (my emphasis).

32. See, Selection from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci, Op. cit., pp. 210-276, where Gramsci says of another context: "In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed.", p. 238.

33. Op. cit., p. 69. Lechner is taking the bourgeois democratic state as his model here. The point is that not all bourgeois states are democratic. Lechner's point of departure is that the crisis in Latin American democracy is related to a permanent crisis of the state.

34. "El término 'gamonalismo' no designa sólo una categoría social y económico: la de los latifundistas o grandes propietarios agrarios. Designa todo un fenómeno... Comprende una larga jerarquía de funcionarios, intermediarios, agentes, parásitos, etc....El factor central es la hegemonía de la gran propiedad semifeudal en la

política y el mecanismo del Estado.", Op. cit., p. 37 (note 1).

35. Op. cit., p. 44-45.

36. "La relación entre novela y realidad quizá sea en la narrativa del 'Poder Personal' donde halle una mejor adecuación histórica por cuanto el fenómeno del autoritarismo (caciquismo, bonapartismo mitómano y salvacionista, gamonalismo latifundista de corte feudal, paternalismo carismático, gorilismo, etc.) surge con la Colonia, se prolonga durante las guerras independendistas y alcanza nuestros días como simples variables equipolentas de una constante rectiva de función unívoca: La de la 'Dictadura' en cuanto forma política aberrante ligada al latifundismo y al esclavismo, al mesianismo populista, a la oligarquía rural y urbana de corte tercermundista, al cresohedonismo de una burguesía valedora y personera de los intereses del imperialismo (anglofrancés, norteamericano, brasileño...) e incluso a un voluntarismo ultranacionalista o iluminista de corte jacobino que degenera, inevitablemente, en pautas de utopismo, milagrería y caudillaje más o menos narcisista.", says Julio Iglesias Calviño in a magnificent passage from his La novela del dictador en Hispamerica Op. cit., pp. 9-10. For Iglesias Calviño, the dictatorship novel is part of a 'metagénero' he calls the 'novela de Poder Personal'.

37. See Alain Rouquié, "Dictadores, militares y legitimidad en América Latina", Crítica y Utopía, No. 5, Septiembre, 1981, pp. 11-28. According to Poulantzas, it would be an 'exceptional form'. In Latin America, however, and in Paraguay in particular, it would be moe truthful to say it was the 'norm'. See, Nicos Poulantzas, The Crisis of the Dictatorships, New Left Books, London, 1976.

38. "...le dictateur est un thème baroque au même titre que le roi fait partie de la tragédie classique.", Wladimir Krysinski, Op. cit.,p. 377. The dictatorship novel thus, in all its modernity, remits us back to the prehistory of the historical novel itself. See also Noé Jitrik, Op. cit., p. 13.

39. For the state as a semiotic and cultural machine, see Phillip Corrigan and Derek Sayers, The Great Arch. English State Formation as Cultural Revolution, Basil Blackwell, London, 1985, especially the Introduction.

40. Since Ciro Alegría published an article in 1951 complaining about the lack of memorable characters in Latin American literature, the 'demand' for such characters has periodically re-emerged, notably in commentaries by Mario Vargas Llosa and Luis Harss. The main point has been that there were no portrayals of psychologically complex, 'round' individual characters -like in the European tradition. Even

the dictatorship novels focalised their dictators from a distance. At least until those of Carpentier, García Márquez and Roa Bastos in which, according to Angel Rama, the authors "dan el salto en el vacío" and answer Alegría's demand. Rama, furthermore, notes the breaking of the Lukacsian 'rule' in Yo el Supremo. See, Ciro Alegría, "Notas sobre el personaje en la novela hispanoamericana", in Juan Loveluck (ed.) La novela hispanoamericana, Editorial Universitaria, Santiago, 1969; Mario Vargas Llosa, "Novela primitiva y novela de creación en America Latina", in Aurora Ocampo (ed.) La crítica de la novela iberoamericana contemporánea, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico, 1973; Luis Harss, Los nuestros, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1975; Angel Rama, Op. cit.. The idea is carried to its extreme, however, by Jorge Castellanos and Miguel Martínez, who, dismissing the 'sociologism' of previous dictatorship novels, suggest that 'los tres grandes' have performed a 'revolution' in Latin American literary form by creating 'round characters' out of their dictators, in other words, creating 'dictator novels' rather than 'dictatorship novels', "El dictador hispanoamericano como personaje literario", Latin American Research Review, Vol. XVI, No. 2, 1981. This idea becomes problematic when wedded to the context I have outlined above, for, as Gerald Martin has pointed out, "...es inútil hablar de la ausencia de personajes en la novela latinoamericana sin antes relacionarla a las estructuras históricas de la novela como género y a las formas materiales de la realidad social latinoamericana...en las estructuras del neocolonialismo, el mito del individualismo burgués solo puede ser sostenido si el caudillo se apropia de toda la individualidad negada al resto de los cuidadanos.", Op. cit., pp. CXXX-CXXXI. In other words, Castellanos and Martínez, without realising it, seem to be theorising something like a 'middle class military coup' at the level of the literary!

41. "Cubism is an art entirely concerned with interaction: the interaction between different aspects; the interaction between structure and movement; the interaction between solids and the space around them; the interaction between the unambiguous signs made on the surface of the picture and the changing reality which they stand in for.", John Berger, Success and Failure of Picasso, Writers and Readers, London, 1980, pp. 59-60. Such is the effect, as we have seen, of the surface of Yo el Supremo.

42. Jean Franco is the one of the only writers to realise that Yo el Supremo's main theme is the question of state formation. She, however, approaches it from the perspective of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri's ideas on the politics of inscription: "La novela desarrolla la confrontación entre el Estado despótico del doctor Francia, ligado al grafismo y a la voz, y el Estado burocrático, anunciado por el anónimo pasquín..." and the capitalist state. The anonymity of

writing thus deterritorialises the paranoid power of El Supremo. Jean Franco, Op. cit.; Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia, The Viking Press, New York, 1977. From the -not unrelated- point of view of political philosophy, however, El Supremo's state is rather located in the transition between both. What is missing from Franco's analysis is the dimension of capitalist reterritorialisation: this is El Supremo's problem. For Deleuze and Guatarri, the processes of capitalist deterritorialisation of despotic territorial codings include an important moment of reterritorialisation, that is, the imposition of its own regulatatory systems of codification and power (containment) such as psychoanalysis (the oedipal complex) and the nuclear family, laws regulating commodity circulation and, most importantly here, the State etc. In Yo el Supremo, as we shall see, this process is dramatised in the attempt to produce a 'people'- reflecting the dominance of political society over civil society in Latin America we have described above. Furthermore, as I shall point out below, El Supremo's voice is *aready a writing*, that is, *dictation*.

43. This is why in the novel "la Revolution 'involue' a la recherche d'elle-méme. C'est cette 'involution' qui...engendre l'espace romanesque.", Alain Sicard, "'Yo el Supremo' de August Roa Bastos: le mythe et l'histoire", in Hommages des hispanistes francais á Noél Salomon, Editorial Laia, Barcelona, 1979, p. 788.

44. "La Casa de Gobierno se convirtió en receptáculo que recogía las vibraciones del Paraguay entero...en el tímpano de los gemidos que exhalan día y noche los cautivos...Recipiente de los rumores de un pueblo en marcha..."(49).

45. In both senses: he becomes the object of History and of historiography. It is to challenge the latter that he has 'returned'. For a more contextualised version of this ideological conflict, see Parts One and Two above.

46. See Immanuel Kant, On History (ed. by L. W. Beck), Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, Indianapolis, 1981. In the essay "What is Enlightenment?" Kant answers as follows: "Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Sapere ande! 'Have courage to use your own reason!' -that is the motto of enlightenment.", p. 3.

47. Boleslao Lewin, Rousseau en la independencia de Latinoamérica, Ediciones Depalma, Buenos Aires, 1980. On Paraguay, see chapter VI, "Juan Jacobo en Asunción", pp.

107-113. For a virulently critical analysis of the influence of Rousseau and jacobinism in Latin America, see Hernando Valencia-Villa, La Constitución de la Químera. Rousseau y la República Jacobina en el Pensamiento Constitucional de Bolívar, Editorial La Caja de Herramientas, Bogotá, 1982. In the latter's view both constituted a "mitología política...y determinaba un modelo de orden estatal que resultó estratégico para el proyecto de liberación nacional en Hispanoamérica", p. 16.

48. In his introduction to Euclides Acevedo, J. C. Rodríguez, Manifiesto Democrático: una propuesta para el cambio, Editorial Aravera, Asunción, 1986, pp. 9-29, called "Autocracia o Democracia", Roa Bastos insists that "El doctor Francia ...no leyó Rousseau, como yo se lo hice leer a su doble imaginario, el personaje de la novela...", p. 28. However, he remits the reader to the study by Adriano Irala Burgos -La ideología del Dr. Francia, Asunción, 1975- which suggests, through a reading of the Nota of July 20, 1811, to the 'Señor Presidente y a los vocales de la Junta Gubernativa de Buenos Aires', signed, amongst others, by Dr. Francia, that in fact he may have read Rousseau's The Social Contract, or at least known its arguments quite well.

49. Compared with the following from Chapter II Book II of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's, The Social Contract, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1975, p. 96-97: "If we enquire wherein lies precisely the greatest good of all... we shall find that it comes down to two main objects, freedom and equality... equality because freedom cannot survive without it... this word must not be taken to imply that degrees of power and wealth should be absolutely the same for all, but rather that no citizen shall be rich enough to buy another and none so poor as to be forced to sell himself... Do you want coherence in the state? Then bring the two extremes as close together as possible; have neither rich men nor beggars... from the one class comes friends of tyrants, from the other, tyrants... Such equality, we shall be told, is a chimera of theory and could not exist in reality... Precisely because the force of circumstances tends always to destroy equality, the force of legislation ought always tend to preserve it." As we have seen, El Supremo also describes himself as a 'Chimera'.

50. John Locke, Two Treatises of Government, New American Library, New York, 1965, especially Chapter 5, "Of Property", in the Second Treatise, pp. 327-344. For the theory of 'possessive individualism' see C. B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1979.

51. Jean Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality" in The Social Contract and Discourses, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1973: "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying 'This is mine', and found people simple enough to believe

him, was the real founder of civil society...the idea of property depends on many prior ideas, which could only be acquired successively, and cannot have been formed all at once in the human mind.", p. 76.

52. "...the state of war cannot arise from mere personal relations, but only from property relations.", Jean Jacques Rousseau, Op. cit., (1975) p. 56. Georg Lukacs, The Young Hegel, Merlin Press, London, 1975: "Even though the Jacobin ideology of the revival of the classical democracies was the heroic illusion of plebian revolutionaries, it was by no means entirely arbitrary...the radical jacobins believed that the relative equality of wealth forms the foundation of real democracy...the idea...reaches its peak in Rousseau's Social Contract.", p. 36.

53. For a useful contextualisation of Rousseau's anti-absolutist political thought, see Ellen Meiskins Wood, "The State and Popular Sovereignty in French Political Thought: A Genealogy of Rousseau's 'General Will'", in Frederick Krantz (ed.), History from Below: Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology in Honour of George Rudé, Concordia University, Montreal, 1985, pp. 117-139.

54. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Op. cit., p. 83.

55. Ibid., p. 84.

56. The Renaissance writer Etienne de la Boétie is also mentioned in the text (see p. 71). In his view, expressed in El discurso de la servidumbre voluntaria, Tusquets Editores, Barcelona, 1980, people live in voluntary servitude because they have forgotten that they were once free. Hence, perhaps, the importance of memory in the novel.

57. The Legislator "employs perfected art -education, persuasion, religious symbols...- to instill the habits and attitudes of citizenship...". Nannerl O. Keohane, Philosophy and the State in France: the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980, p. 438.

58. "The lawgiver is the engineer who invents the machine; the prince is merely the mechanic who sets it up and operates it,", Op. cit., p. 84. The novel's parodic evocation of Machiavelli's The Prince rightly occurs in one of the many moments El Supremo is underlining the importance of "el nacimiento de la Patria, la formación de la Republica". He says: "Sólo Yo sé las veces que para tapar sus necesidades tuve que añadir un trozo de pellejo de zorro cuando no bastó la piel de león parado en el escudo de la República."(29). In Machiavelli's political manual for Princes, he suggests that they must learn from the beasts: "he must learn from the fox and the lion". The former because of its cunning, and the second because of its power. See Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, Penguin Books,

Harmondsworth, 1981, p. 99. For a Republican reading of Rousseau underlining his relation to Machiavelli, see Maurizio Viroli, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the 'Well-Ordered Society', Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988. The demonic myth built around Machiavelli emerged with the Church's response to his Republicanism and secular grounding of politics, and appeared in much literature of the period, for example in Shakespeare, in the guise of the figure of the Machiavel. Such myths also proliferated around the figure of Dr. Francia. In Yo el Supremo, it appears as a counterpoint to El Supremo's discourse in the correspondence between Dr. V. Días de Ventura and Fray Mariano Ignacio Bel-Asco: "se (El Supremo, J.K.) inficionó profundamente de las macchiabelísticas ideas que pretenden erigir una sociedad atea sobre la abominación del hombre sin Dios."(160) In another note by the Compiler quoting the same correspondence Días de Ventura further demonises El Supremo's secular reduction of politics to power and instrumental reason by representing the dictator's relation with his people as being like that of a behaviourist scientist with his rats(153-154). Their problem is not, however, one of democracy, but of religious rather than scientific guidance. For the demonic myth about Machiavelli see Ernst Cassirer, The Myth of the State, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973, pp. 116-162. For the Republican Machiavelli, see his The Discourses, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1988. This work is a commentary on the first ten books of Livy's The History of Rome from its Foundation, which relates, amongst other events, the origins of dictatorship in the republican tradition: its function was to defend the state at a moment of danger. See Livy, The Early History of Rome, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1988, p. 213.

59. Alfred Cobban, Aspects of the French Revolution, Paladin, London, 1968.

60. In a recent interview Roa Bastos has said the following about 'absolute power': "Porque el poder absoluto se entiende cuando es una emanación de una colectividad que delega en un hombre sus poderes inalienables para decidir sobre su destino, sobre su suerte. Pero ocurre que en la mayoria de los casos que nosotros conocemos este poder absoluto va engendrando una especie de contrapartida que va subsumiendo, aniquilando esa primera etapa de poder al servicio de los demás para convertirse en un fin en sí mismo.", Joaquín Soler Serrano, Escritores a fondo, Planeta, Barcelona, 1986, p. 251. The Rousseauian idea that dictatorships may be temporally imposed, but that the 'people' are always there, permeates many of his discussions of the Stroessner regime. See, for example, "The exiles of the Paraguayan writer", Review, No. 30, 1981, pp. 17-20.

61. At least in the structuralist view. See the entry under 'semiotic rectangle' in A. J. Greimas and J. Courtes, Semiotics and Language: an Analytic Dictionary, Indiana

University Press, Bloomington, 1982.

62. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Op. cit., especially pp. 49-68.

63. Lucio Colletti, "Rousseau as Critic of 'Civil Society'" in From Rousseau to Lenin, New Left Books, London, 1972.

64. For an interesting recent discussion of narrative and order, see Laura Mulvey, "Changes: Thouhgts on Myth, Narrative and Historical Experience", History Workshop, Issue 23, Spring 1987, pp. 3-19.

65. G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, Dover Publications, New York, p. 453.

66. And, as we saw with regard to La Andaluza, it is the 'point' where vision (the eye of reason) runs up against desire (smell).

67. Jesús Martín-Barbero, De los medios a las mediaciones, Ediciones G. Gili, Mexico, 1987, p. 98.

68. In this sense, the novel would seem to be suggesting that Mitre and Sarmiento's reading of Dr. Francia as the embodiment of 'barbarie' was an ideologically motivated misrecognition of his alternative project of political modernity.

69. See Linda Hutcheon, A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction, Routledge, London, 1988.

70. The author referred to by the Compiler is Robert Musil.

71. These are the kinds of formal questions, as are those addressed above in Part Two, posed by the 'historiographical metafiction' according to Linda Hutcheon: "It is part of the postmodernist stand to confront the paradoxes of fictive/historical representation, the particular/the general, and the present/past...Historiographic metafiction suggests that truth and falsity may indeed not be the right terms in which to discuss fiction...Postmodern fiction suggests that to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present...Postmodernism deliberately confuses the notion that history's problem is verification, while fiction's is veracity.", Op. cit., pp. 106, 109, 110. She also insists, however, that this kind of fiction also needs such an oppositions: "Such novels instal and then blur the line between fiction and history.", p. 113.

72. On 'order-words', see Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Athlone Press, London, 1988: "The elementary unit of language -the statement- is the order-word...Language is made not to be

believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience.", p. 76.

73. See Raúl Dorra, "'Yo el Supremo': la circular perpetua", Texto Crítico, IV, No. 9. 1978.

74. Op. cit., p. 212. Adornos's entry is called 'Sacrificial lamb'.

75. For the oral culture of Paraguay and its significance for literature, see Augusto Roa Bastos, "Una cultura oral", Hispamérica, Año XVI, Núms. 46-47, 1987. For the critique of Western metaphysics 'of presence' (logocentrism), see Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1977: "...writing, the letter, the sensible inscription, has always been considered by Western tradition as the body and matter external to the spirit, the breath, to speech, and to the logos.", p. 35.

76. See note 9 above, which does not even touch on the Spanish language dimension of this context, and the relations of power that this involves.

77. El Supremo says of Patiño: "No ha aprendido aún su oficio. Tendré que enseñarle a escribir."(24). The section of the novel in which the lesson takes place has been included in Roa Bastos's Antología Personal, Op. cit., with the title "La lección de escritura". The inter-texts that come immediately to mind are C. Lévi-Strauss' "The Writing Lesson" in his Tristes Tropiques, Jonathan Cape, London, 1973, p. 294-304, and Derrida's critique in Op. cit.. A fundamental text for both writers is Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Essay on the Origin of Languages.

78. El Supremo tells Patiño "Te ensenaré el difícil arte de la ciencia escriptural que no es, como crees, el arte de la floración de los rasgos sino de la defloración de los signos."(66) This is also related to the Compiler's idea that his text was read before being written.

79. The irony is, of course, is that El Supremo also negates sexual desire -and the writing derived from it. See the episode with 'La Andaluza' described above.

80. See Domingo Miliani, "El dictador: objeto narrativo en 'Yo el Supremo'", Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana, No. 4, 1976. As Miliani points out, what marks Roa Bastos' dictator as different from those of other authors, like García Márquez and Carpentier, is that he assumes it as a positive, indeed a revolutionary, republican duty.

81. The novel also contains other models of writing: the secretary Patiño, and the picaresque Cantero -whom we are told by de Cámara "me ha estado leyendo algo vagamente

parecido a una biografía novelada del Supremo del Paraguay. Abyecto epinicio en el que pone al atrabiliario Dictador por los cuernos de la luna."(374). As we have seen he was also the writer of "Gasparina".

82. In "Algunos núcleos generadores de un texto narrativo", Op. cit., Roa Bastos explains this aspect of the Compiler's function in the following way: "En un movimiento que va desde lo exterior al interior, el compilador construye, 'compone', el texto narrativo. 'Hace' la novela, pero a su vez es 'hecho' por ella. En lo exterior, la máscara que oculta al compilador real en su función aparentemente neutra y objetiva como organizador del texto. Pero en lo interior, el compilador se desdobla y participa vivencialmente, en tanto narrador, en la acción del discurso narrativo: primero, como 'doble' antinómico del compilador mismo que se opone a él y lo niega; luego como sustituto de El Supremo.", p. 189.

83. El Supremo repeats Loco-Solo's association of migration and betrayal: "los que pudieron salvar el pellejo, huyeron... En el extranjero se hicieron peores aún. Renegados de su país, piensas en el Paraguay desde un punto de vista no paraguayo...¿Qué pueden significar aquí sus hazañas intelectuales?...Cuanto más cultos quieren ser, menos quieren ser paraguayos..."(38) Roa Bastos' own exile, of course, immediately comes to mind.

84. In an early note the Compiler informs the reader about a journey he made to the Paraguayan village of Ka'asapá. He took a tape recorder and a camera with him. But on leaving it fell in a stream. The people of the village helped him recuperate his lost recordings: " No voy a permitir que nuestro arroyo robe a los arribeños alumbrados que vienen a visitarnos!", says the Mayor, humorously. The next morning the Compiler leaves: "A la salida del sol seguí camino, saludado largo trecho por los gritos y vítores de esa gente animosa y hospitalaria, llevando la voz y las imágenes de sus ancianos, hombres, mujeres, niños; de su verde y luminoso paisaje."(34) It is these voices and images that the Compiler's writing cannot represent.

85. Augusto Roa Bastos, "Algunos núcleos generadores de un texto narrativo", Op. cit., p. 186.

86. Ibid., p. 184.

87. Ibid..

CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages I have attempted to show how Yo el Supremo is inscribed into a variety of contexts, both conjunctural and epochal. In doing so, however, I hope to have revealed that such contexts do not function as mere backdrops to the work, but that they are, rather, inscribed into the very fabric of the text itself -as, for example, intertexts. Fundamental to this approach has been the foregrounding of the 'present', the time of Yo el Supremo's writing (as opposed to its referent in the 'past'), as full of significance for understanding its logic of production- including the emergence and formation of a possible public for the novel. Above, I have thus attempted to extend the intertextual analysis of Yo el Supremo beyond the formalism of pointing out how it quotes and misquotes or re-articulates pre-formed discursive materials (parody) from the heights of the 'literary' and included some consideration of these intertexts' ideological significance. Furthermore, with regard to El Supremo's quotation of Rousseau, I have also tried to show how such quotation and misquotation has determinate effects in the total economy of the novel and the drama it re-enacts. In this way, I hope to have made clear that Yo el Supremo's relationship to its contexts is highly textually mediated -as befits a novel that has been 'compiled'.

The kinds of (inter-)texts I have privileged have been mainly historiographic and political. There are, of course, others: from classics of the world literary canon-

Shakespeare, Pacal, Borges, Rabelais, Roussel, Greek myhtology...- to narratives from a range of native indian cultures in Paraguay (Guaraní and non-Guaraní). In his, almost obsessive, de-construction of the 'muralla china' of bourgeois culture and the Paraguayan palimpsest, it may even be said that the Compiler, parallel to the story of the origins of political modernity in Paraguay, has also re-presented in the novel a veritable encyclopedia of modern culture relevant to and <u>for</u> Paraguay. Amongst such texts, however, it is perhaps the relation between <u>Yo el Supremo</u> and native Indian narratives that deserves considerably more attention -probably along the lines of the particular historical forms of transculturation that have taken place within the region (of which the work of Roa Bastos would be an important example). The critical work of Angel Rama would be, of course, an important point of departure here. Although I have signposted possible paths for such investigation, I have not been able to develop this matter here in the manner it deserves.

What does emerge from the above analysis, however, is the importance of the <u>state</u> -and its crises- for the novel, both as political structure and cultural producer. In this sense, I believe that underlining the importance of the fact that Roa Bastos wrote the novel in Buenos Aires -the local metropolis- between 1968 and 1973/4, that is, during a major crisis in the Argentine Liberal state, is fundamental. That this has not really been given the attention it merits

surely reveals the formalism with which Yo el Supremo has been predominantly interpreted. Instead, I hope to have proved that reading the novel from Buenos Aires -where it was written- is productive, and illuminating of Roa Bastos' literary history as a whole. One of the implications of my analysis is that exile should not be thought of as a 'no-place'. On the contrary, in Roa Bastos' case, the fact that the major part of his literary life has been spent in Buenos Aires, is, like the Paraguayan palimpsest itself, "llen(o) de reverbaciones".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adorno, Theodor: Minima Moralia. Reflections from Damaged Life, Verso, London, 1978.
Alberdi, Juan Bautista: Historia de la Guerra del Paraquay, Ediciones de la Patria Grande, Buenos Aires, 1962.
----------: Escritos póstumos, Vol. 5, Sarrat, Buenos Aires, 1897.
Alegría, Ciro: "Notas sobre el personaje en la novela hispanoamericana", in Juan Loveluck (ed.), La novela latinoamericana, Editorial Universitaria, Santiago, 1969.
Althusser, Louis: Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays, New Left Books, London, 1971.
Anderson, Benedict: Imagined Communities. Refelections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso, London, 1983.
Andreu, Jean: "'Hijo de Hombre' de A. Roa Bastos: Fragmentación y unidad", Revista Iberoamericana, Vol. XLII, No. 96-97, Julio-Diciembre, 1976.
----------: "Modalidades del relato en 'Yo el Supremo' de Augusto Roa Bastos: lo Dicho, el Dictado y el Diktat", in Seminario sobre 'Yo el Supremo' de Augusto Roa Bastos, Centre de Recherches Latino-Américaines de l'Université de Poitiers, Poitiers, 1976.
----------: "Lectures anarchistes: la 'Librería' de 'La Protesta', Buenos Aires, juin 1914", Caravelle. Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, No. 45, 1985.
Arditi, Benjamín: Estado omnívero, sociedad estatizada. Poder y orden político en Paraquay, Centro de Documentación y Estudios, Asunción, 1987.
Báez, Cecilio: La tiranía en Paraquay, Asunción, 1903.
Bakhtin, Mikhail: Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1984.
Balderston, Daniel: "Eater-Reception and De-composition: Worms in 'Yo el Supremo'", Modern Language Notes, 101 (2), 1986.
---------- (ed.): The Historical Novel in Latin America. A Symposium, Ediciones Hispamérica, Tulane University, Gaithesburg, 1986.
----------: "Roa's *Julio César*: Commentaries and Reflections", Chasqui-Revista de literatura latinoamericana, Vol. XIX, No. 1, 1990.
Bareiro Saguier, Rubén: "La Historia y las historias en 'Yo el Supremo' de Augusto Roa Bastos", in Seminario sobre 'Yo el Supremo' de Augusto Roa Bastos, Centre de Recherches Latino-Américaines de l'Université de Poitiers, Poitiers, 1976.
----------: "La novela de la dictadura en Latinoamérica", El País, 15 January, 1978.
----------: Augusto Roa Bastos, Ediciones Trilce/Editions Caribéennes, Montevideo, 1989.
Bareiro Saguier, Rubén & Flecha, Jacinto: "De lo fantástico popular a lo maravilloso histórico", Rio de la Plata, No. 1, 1985.
Barrett, Rafael: El dolor paraquayo, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas, 1978.
Barthes, Roland et. al.: Análisis estructural del relato, Premia Editores, Mexico, 1982.
Bejerano, Ramón César: ¿Genocidio en el Paraquay?, Editorial

Toledo, Asunción, 1974.
Benedetti, Mario: "El recurso del supremo patriarca", Revista de Crítica literaria latinoamericana, No. 3, 1976.
Benjamin, Walter: Illuminations, Johnathan Cape, London, 1979.
----------: Charles Baudelaire. A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism, Verso, London, 1983.
Benveniste, Emile: Problemas de lingüística general, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico, 1982.
Berger, John: Success and Failure of Picasso, Writers and Readers, London, 1980.
Boetie, Etienne de la: El Discurso de la Servidumbre Voluntaria, Tusquets Editores, Barcelona, 1980.
Bonasso, Miguel: Recuerdo de la muerte, Ediciones Era, Mexico, 1984.
Burgos, Fernando (ed.): Las voces del Karaí: estudios sobre Augusto Roa Bastos, Edelsa-Edi-6, Madrid, 1988.
Canfield, Martha L.: El 'Patriarca' de García Márquez: arquetipo literario del dictador hispano-americano, Universidad de Florencia, Firenze, 1984.
Calviño Iglesias, Julio: La novela del dictador en Hispanoamérica, Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, Madrid, 1985.
Carballo, Maria Elena: "Lo femenino y lo absoluto en 'Yo el Supremo'", in Fernando Burgos (ed.), Las voces del Karaí: estudios sobre Augusto Roa Bastos, Edelsa-Edi-6, Madrid, 1988.
Cardoso, Efraím: 20 preguntas sin respuesta sobre los Saltos del Guairá, Asunción, 1971.
Carpentier, Alejo: El recurso del método, Siglo Vientiuno Editores, Buenos Aires, 1974.
Casaccia, Gabriel: Los Herederos, Planeta, Barcelona, 1976.
Cassirer, Ernst: The Myth of the State, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973.
Castellanos, Jorge & Martínez, Miguel: "El dictador hispanoamericano como personaje literario", Latin American Research Review, Vol. XVI, No. 2, 1981.
Cavarozzi, Marcelo: "Peronismo, sindicato y política en la Argentina", in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), Historia del movimiento obrero en América Latina Vol. 3, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico, 1984.
Cerutti Guldberg, Horacio: Filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1983.
Chaves, Julio César: El Supremo Dictador. Biografía de José Gaspar de Francia, Editorial Ayacucho, Buenos Aires, 1946.
Ciria, Alberto: Política y cultura popular: la Argentina peronista, 1946-1955, Ediciones de la Flor, Buenos Aires, 1983.
----------: "Angels and Demons", Index on Censorship, Vol. 14, No. 6, December, 1985.
Clastres, Hélène: La Terre Sans Mal. Le prophétisme Tupi-Guarani, Editions de Seuil, Paris, 1975.
Clastres, Pierre: Society Against the State, Zone Books, New York, 1989.
Cobban, Alfred: Aspects of the French Revolution, Paladin, London, 1968.

Colletti, Lucio: From Rousseau to Lenin, New Left Books, London, 1972.
Colombino, Andrés Flores: La fuga de intelectuales. Emigración paraguaya, Montevideo, 1972.
Cornejo Polar, Antonio: Literatura y sociedad en el Perú: la novela indigenista, Editora Lasontay, Lima, 1980.
Corrigan, Phillip & Sayers, Derek: The Great Arch. English State Formation as Cultural Revolution, Basil Blackwell, London, 1985.
Corvalán, Grazziella: Ideología y origen social de los grupos políticos en el Paraguay, Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos, Asunción, 1972.
Creydt, Oscar: Formación histórica de la nación paraguaya, Editorial Adelante, Buenos Aires, 1962.
Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Felix: Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia, The Viking Press, New York, 1977.
----------: A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Athlone Press, London, 1988.
Derrida, Jacques: Of Grammatology, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1977.
Díaz de Arce, Omar: "El Paraguay contemporáneo", in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), América Latina: historia de medio siglo, 1. América del Sur, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, UNAM, Mexico, 1977.
Domínguez, Manuel: El alma de la raza, Casa Editora de Cándido Zamphirópolos, Asunción, 1918.
Dorra, Raúl: "'Yo el Supremo': la circular perpetua", Texto Crítico, IV, No. 9, 1978.
Dussel, Enrique: Introducción a una filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana, Extemporáneos, Mexico, 1977.
"Entretiens. Augusto Roa Bastos", Caravelle. Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, No. 17, 1971.
Escobar, Ticio et. al.: La Guerra del 70. Una visión fotográfica, Ediciones Museo del Barro, Asunción, 1981.
Esposito, Mario: "Argentina, hablan los guerrilleros", Marcha, 15 Junio, 1973.
Ezquerro, Milagros: "Introducción", in Augusto Roa Bastos, Yo el Supremo (edición de Milagros Ezquerro), Ediciones Catedra, Madrid, 1983.
----------: Théorie et Fiction. Le nouveau roman hispano-américain, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Sociocritiques, Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier, 1983.
----------: "El cuento último-primero de Augusto Roa Bastos", Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana, No. 19, 1984.
----------: "Fonction narratrice et idéologie", in L'Idéologique dans le texte (Textes Hispaniques), Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, Toulouse, 1984.
Flecha, Víctor-Jacinto: Años 20: movimientos socio-políticos en el Paraguay y proyección posteriores, Unpublished manuscript, n.d..
Foucault, Michel: "Of Other Spaces", Diacritics, Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring, 1986.
Franco, Jean: "El pasquín y los diálogos de los muertos. Discursos diacrónicos en 'Yo el Supremo'", in Saúl Sosnowski (comp.), Augusto Roa Bastos y la producción cultural

Press, Oxford, 1967.
----------: The Philosophy of History, Dover Publications, New York, n.d..
Herken Krauer, Juan Carlos: "Diplomacia británica en el Río de la Plata: el 'caso Rafael Barrett' (1908-1910)", Caravelle. Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, No. 41, 1983.
Hernández Arregui, Juan José: La formación de la conciencia nacional (1930-1960), Ediciones Hachea, Buenos Aires, 1960.
----------: Peronismo y socialismo, Ediciones Hachea, Buenos Aires, 1972.
Hutcheon, Linda: A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction, Routledge, London, 1988.
Irala Burgos, Adriano: "El horizonte ideológico en 'Yo el Supremo'", in Beatriz Rodríguez Alcalá de González Oddone et. al., Comentarios sobre 'Yo el Supremo', Ediciones Club el Libro No. 1, Asunción, 1975.
----------: La ideología del Dr. Francia, Asunción, 1975.
Jameson, Frederic: The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act, Cornell University Press, 1981.
Jitrik, Noé: "De la historia a la escritura: predominios, disimetrías, acuerdos en la novela histórica latinoamericana", in Daniel Balderston (ed.), The Historical Novel in Latin America. A Symposium, Ediciones Hispamérica, Tulane University, Gaithersburg, 1986.
Kant, Immanuel: On History, Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, Indianapolis, 1981.
Katra, William H.: Domingo F. Sarmiento: Public Writer (Between 1839 and 1852), Arizona State University, Tempe, 1985.
Keohane, Nannerl D.: Philosopy and the State in France: the Rennaisance to the Enlightenment, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980.
King, John: Sur. A study of the Argentine literary journal and its role in the development of a culture, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.
----------: Magical Reels. A History of Cinema in Latin America, Verso, London, 1990.
Kohut, Karl: "'Yo el Supremo': reflexión histórica y realidad política actual", in Ludwig Schrader (ed.), Augusto Roa Bastos. Actas del Coloquio Franco-Aleman, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tubingen, 1984.
Kraniauskas, John: "Prolegómenos a una lectura contextual de 'Yo el Supremo'", in Fernando Burgos (ed.), Las voces del Karaí: estudios sobre Augusto Roa Bastos, Edelsa-Edi-6, Madrid, 1988.
Krysinski, Wladimir: Carrefours de signes. Essais sur le roman moderne, Mouton Publishers, The Hague, 1981.
----------: "Entre la polifonía topológica y el dialogismo dialéctico: 'Yo el Supremo' como punta de fuga de la novela moderna", in Fernando Burgos (ed.) Las voces del Karaí: estudios sobre Augusto Roa Bastos, Edelsa-Edi-6, Madrid, 1988.
Lacan, Jacques: Écrits. A Selection, Tavistock Publications, London, 1977.

americana, Ediciones de la Flor/Folios Ediciones, Buenos Aires, 1986.
Frutos N., Cristobal A.: Stroessner: una luz en la noche, Asunción, 1968.
Gallo, Marta: "Pasión del texto: muerte y resurrección en 'Yo el Supremo'", in Lia Schwartz Lerner & Isaias Lerner (eds.), Homenaje a Ana María Barrenechea, Editorial Castalia, Madrid, 1984.
Galeano, Eduardo: The Open Veins of Latin America, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1973.
----------: Memorias del fuego, II. Las caras y las máscaras, Siglo Veintiuno editores, Mexico. 1984.
Gamón, Efraín Enríquez: Itaipú. Aguas de oro, Buenos Aires, 1975.
Gaona, Francisco: Introducción a la historia gremial y social del Paraguay, Ed. Arandú, Asunción, 1967.
Genette, Gérard: Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degrée, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1982.
Getino, Octavio & Solanas, Fernando: "Towards a Third Cinema", Afterimage, No. 3, Summer, 1971 (originally written in 1969).
Gillespie, Richard: Soldiers of Perón. Argentina's Montoneros, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982.
González, Juan Natalicio: Cómo se construye una nación, Asuncion, 1949.
González Casanova, Pablo (coord.): América Latina: historia de medio siglo, 1. América del Sur, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, UNAM, Mexico, 1977.
----------: Historia del movimiento obrero en América Latina Vol. 3, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico, 1984.
----------: Historia política de los campesinos latinoamericanos, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico, 1984.
Graham-Yooll, Andrew: De Perón a Videla, Legasa, Buenos Aires, 1989.
Gramsci, Antonio: Selections from the Prison Notebooks, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1978.
Greimas, A.J. & Courtes, J.: Semiotics and Language: an Analytic Dictionary, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1982.
Grunberg, Georg & Grunberg, Friedl: "Los Guaraníes Occidentales", in Augusto Roa Bastos (comp.), Las culturas condenadas, Siglo Veintiuno, Mexico, 1978.
Halperín Donghi, Tulio: El revisionismo histórico argentino, Siglo Veintiuno, Mexico, 1970.
----------: "Prólogo: Una nación para el desierto argentino", in Proyecto y construcción de una nación (Argentina 1846-1880), Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas, 1980.
----------: "El revisionismo histórico como visión decadentista de la historia nacional", Punto de Vista, No. 23, Abril, 1985.
Harss, Luis: Los nuestros, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1975.
Hegel, G.W.F.: The Philosophy of Right, Oxford University

LaCapra, Dominick: History and Criticism, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1985.
Laclau, Ernesto: "Argentina -Imperialist Strategy and the May Crisis", New Left Review, No. 62, July-August. 1970.
----------: Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, Verso, London, 1979.
Lafaye, Jacques: Mesías, cruzadas, utopías. El judeo-cristianismo en las sociedades ibéricas, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1984.
Laíno, Domingo: Paraguay: Fronteras y penetración brasileña, Ed. Cerro Corá, Asunción, 1977.
Lara Castro, Jorge: "Paraguay: luchas sociales y nacimiento del movimiento campesino", in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), Historia política de los campesinos latinoamericanos, Siglo Veintiuno editores, Mexico, 1984.
Latin American Bureau, Paraguay. Power Game, London, 1980.
Lechner, Norberto: La crisis del estado en América Latina, El Cid Editores, Caracas, 1977.
Lienhard, Martin: "Apuntes sobre los desdoblamientos, la mitología y la escritura en 'Yo el Supremo'", Hispamérica, 19, 1978.
Lenin, V. I.: Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1975.
Lévi-Strauss, Claude: Tristes Tropiques, Jonathan Cape, London, 1973.
Lewin, Boleslao: Rousseau en la independencia de Latinoamérica, Ediciones Depalma, Buenos Aires, 1980.
Livy: The Early History of Rome, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1988.
Locke, John: Two Treatises of Government, New American Library, New York, 1965.
López, Adalberto: The Revolt of the Comuneros, 1721-1735, Schenkman, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1976.
Losada, Alejandro: "La internacionalización de la literatura latinoamericana", Caravelle. Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, No. 42, 1984.
----------: La Literatura en la Sociedad de América Latina, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, Munich, 1987.
Lukacs, Georg: The Young Hegel, Merlin Press, London, 1975.
----------: The Historical Novel, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1981.
Machiavelli, Niccolo: The Prince, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1981.
----------: The Discourses, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1988.
Macpherson, C.B.: The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, Oxford University Press, 1979.
Marcos, Juan Manuel: Roa Bastos, precursor del post-boom, Editoral Katún, Mexico, 1983.
----------: "Julio Correa: postmodernismo y parodia", Plural, Núm. 143, Agosto, 1983.
Marcuse, Herbert: One Dimensional Man, Abacus, London, 1972.
Mariátegui, Juan Carlos: Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana, Obras Completas, Vol. 2, Biblioteca Amauta, Lima, 1978.
Márquez, Gabriel García: El otoño del patriarca, Editorial

Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1975.
----------: El general en su laberinto, Mondadori, Madrid, 1989.
Martí, José: Política de Nuestra América, Siglo Veintiuno editores, Mexico, 1979.
Martin, Georges: "Répéres por une étude de la 'compilatoire' historique dans 'Yo el Supremo'", Les Langues Néo-Latines, No. 222, 1977.
Martin, Gerald: "'El Señor Presidente'. Una lectura contextual", in Miguel Angel Asturias, El Señor Presidente, Edición Crítica de las Obras Completas, Editions Klincksieck, Paris, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1977.
----------: "'Yo el Supremo': the Dictator and his Script", Forum for Modern Languages, Vol. XV, No. 2, 1979.
----------: Journeys Through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century, Verso, London, 1989.
Martín-Barbero, Jesús: De los medios a las mediaciones, Ediciones G. Gili, Mexico, 1987.
Martínez, Tomás Eloy: La novela de Perón, Legasa, Buenos Aires, 1985.
Marx, Karl: Grundrisse, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977.
----------: Surveys from Exile, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977.
----------: The German Ideology, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1977.
----------: Early Writings, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977.
McCabe, Colin: "On Discourse", Economy and Society, Vol. 8, No. 3, August, 1979.
Meiskins Wood, Ellen: "The State and Popular Sovereignty in French Political Thought: A Genealogy of Rousseau's 'General Will'", in Frederick Krantz (ed.), History from Below. Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology in Honour of George Rudé, Concordia University, Montreal, 1985.
Meliá, Bartomeu: El guaraní conquistado y reducido, Universidad Católica, Asunción, 1986.
Mennel, D. Jan: "La químera en el bestiario de Roa Bastos", Nuevo Texto Crítico, Vol. III, No. 5, Primer semestre, 1990.
Miliani, Domingo: "El dictador: objeto narrativo en 'Yo el Supremo'", Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana, No. 4, 1976.
Mitre, Bartolomé: Historia de Belgrano y de la Independencia Argentina. Vol. 1, Ediciones Imprenta y Librería de Mayo, Buenos Aires, 1876.
Mulvey, Laura: "Changes: Thoughts on Myth, Narrative and Historical Experience", History Workshop, Issue 23, Spring, 1987.
Munck, Ronaldo; Falcón, Ricardo & Galitelli, Bernardo: Argentina: from Anarchism to Peronism, Zed Press, London, 1987.
Nickson, R. Andrew: "Tyranny and longevity: Stroessner's Paraguay", Third World Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 1, January, 1988.
Ortega Peña, R. & Duhalde, E.L.: Baring Brothers y la historia política argentina, Editorial Sudestada, Buenos Aires, 1968.

Oszlack, Oscar: La formación del estado argentino, Editorial Belgrano, Buenos Aires, 1982.
Pacheco, Carlos: "Diálogo con Augusto Roa Bastos. El escritor es un productor de mentiras", Actualidades, No. 6, 1980-1982.
----------: "'Yo el Supremo': la insurrección polifónica", introduction to Augusto Roa Bastos, Yo el Supremo, Biblioteca Ayacucho, Caracas, 1986.
----------: Narrativa de la dictadura y crítica literaria, Ediciones CELARG, Fundación Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos, Caracas, 1987.
Painter, James: Paraguay in the 1970's: Continuity and Change in the Political Process, Institute of Latin American Studies Working Papers 9, University of London, London, 1983.
Peñate, Julio et. al.: De Cervantes a Orovilca. Homenaje a Jean-Paul Borel, Visor Libros, Madrid, 1990.
Phelps, Gilbert: Tragedy of Paraguay, Charles Knight, London, 1975.
Pla, Alberto J.: Ideología y método en la historiografía argentina, Ediciones Nueva Visión, Buenos Aires, 1972.
Pomer, Leon: La Guerra del Paraguay, Centro Editor de América Latina, Buenos Aires, 1971.
Popular Memory Group, "Popular Memory: theory, politics, method", in Making Histories. Studies in history-writing and politics, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Hutchinson, London, 1982.
Poulantzas, Nicos: The Crisis of the Dictatorships, New Left Books, London, 1976.
Rama, Angel: Los dictadores latinoamericanos, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1976.
----------: La transculturación narrativa latinoamericana, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico, 1982.
Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith: Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics, Methuen, London, 1983.
Roa Bastos, Augusto: "¡No llores patria! (Ante el túmulo del Mariscal José Félix Estigarribia)", 1940, partially quoted in Alfredo M. Seiferheld, Estigarribia. Veinte años de política paraguaya, Ed. Laurel, Asunción, 1983.
----------: "Eternamente Hermanos", 1954, partially quoted in Leandro Prieto Yegros, "Carta abierta a Augusto Roa Bastos", Ultima Hora, 4 August, 1986.
----------: Hijo de Hombre, Editoral Argos Vergara, Barcelona, 1979 (1st ed., 1960).
----------: El baldío, Losada, Buenos Aires, 1966.
----------: Yo el Supremo, Siglo Veintiuno editores, Buenos Aires, 1974.
----------: Yo el Supremo (edición de Milagros Ezquerro), Ediciones Cátedra, Madrid, 1983.
----------: Antología personal, Editorial Nueva Imagen, Mexico, 1980.
----------: El naranjal ardiente (Nocturno paraguayo), 1947-1949, Alcándara, Asunción, 1983.
----------: "El Sonámbulo", in Cándido López. Imágenes de la guerra del Paraguay, Franco Maria Ricci, Milan, 1984.

----------: "Crónica paraguaya", Sur, No. 293, 1965.
----------: "Paraguay ante la necesidad de una segunda independencia", Casa de las Américas, No. 32, 1965.
----------: "América Latina en MARCHA", Marcha, 8 Junio, 1973.
----------: "Cultura popular en América Latina y creación literaria", Stromata, Vol. 30, Nos. 1-2, 1974.
----------: "Algunos núcleos generadores de un texto narrativo", Escritura, Núm. 4, Julio-Agosto, 1977.
----------: "Rafael Barrett. Descubridor de la realidad social del Paraguay", prologue to Rafael Barrett, El dolor paraguayo, Ediciones Ayacucho, Caracas, 1978.
---------- (comp.): Las culturas condenadas, Siglo Veintiuno, Mexico, 1978.
----------: "Los trasterrados de Comala", Caravelle. Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien, No. 37, 1981.
----------: "The exiles of the Paraguayan writer", Review, No. 30, 1981.
----------: "Las últimas boqueadas del tiranosaurio paraguayo", El Pueblo, 30 Julio, 1986.
----------: "Introducción", Euclides Acevedo & J.C. Rodriguez, Manifiesto Democrático: una propuesta para el cambio, Editorial Araverá, Asunción, 1986.
----------: "Una cultura oral", Hispamérica, Año XVI, Núms. 46-47, 1987.
----------: "El autor como lector de su obra", in Julio Peñate et. al., De Cervantes a Orovilca. Homenaje a Jean-Paul Borel, Visor Libros, Madrid, 1990.
Robertson, J.P. & Robertson, W.P.: Four Years in Paraguay, E.L. Carey & A. Hart, Philadelphia, 1838.
----------: Francia's Reign of Terror, E.L. Carey & A. Hart, Philadelphia, 1839.
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques: The Social Contract, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1975.
----------: The Social Contract and Discourses, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1973.
Rengger, J.R. & Longchamp, M.F.: The Reign of Doctor Joseph Gaspard Roderick De Francia, Kennikat Press, New York, 1971 (1st ed., 1827).
Rock, David (ed.): Argentina in the Twentieth Century, Duckworth, London, 1975.
Rock, David: Argentina 1516-1987, I. B. Tauris, London, 1987.
Rodríguez Alcalá de González Oddone, Beatriz et. al.: Comentarios sobre 'Yo el Supremo', Club del Libro No. 1, Asunción, 1975.
Rodríguez Alcalá, Guido: Ideología Autoritaria, RP Ediciones, Asuncion, 1987.
Rodríguez Périsco, Adriana: "Sarmiento y la biografía de la barbarie", Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos. Los complementarios, 3, Abril, 1990.
Rouquié, Alain: "Dictadores, militares y legitimidad en América Latina", Crítica y Utopía, No. 5, Septiembre, 1981.
Ruiz de Montoya, Antonio: La conquista espiritual del

Paraguay, Equipo Difusor de Estudios de Historia Iberoamericana, Rosario, 1989 (1st ed. 1639).
Saguier Aceval, Emilio: El Supremo, Asuncion, 1970.
Said, Edward: Beginnings. Intention and Method, Colombia University Press, New York, 1985.
Saldívar, Dasso: "Entrevista: Augusto Roa Bastos. La ira tranquila", El País, 20 Octubre, 1985.
Salinas, Darío: "Movimiento obrero y procesos políticos en Paraguay", in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), Historia del movimiento obrero en América Latina, Vol. 3, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico, 1984.
Sarlo, Beatriz: "La izquierda ante la cultura: del dogmatismo al populismo", Punto de Vista, No. 20, Mayo, 1984.
----------: "Intelectuales: escisión o mímesis", Punto de Vista, No. 25, Diciembre, 1985.
Sarmiento, Domingo F.: Facundo. Civilización y barbarie, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1970.
Schrader, Ludwig (ed.): Augusto Roa Bastos. Actas del Coloquio Franco-Aleman, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tubingen, 1984.
Schwarz Lerner, Lia & Lerner, Isaias (eds.): Homenaje a Ana María Barrenechea, Editorial Castalia, Madrid, 1984.
Sebrelli, Juan José: Los deseos imaginarios del Peronismo, Editorial Legasa, Buenos Aires, 1984.
Segovia Corvalán, J.F.: Origen y desarrollo de las clases sociales en Paraguay 1870-1904, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, UNAM, Mexico, 1979.
Seiferheld, Alfredo M.: "La guerra del 70. Un lustro trágico para América", in Ticio Escobar et. al., La Guerra del 70. Una visión fotográfica, Edición Museo del Barro, Asunción, 1981.
----------: Estigarribia. Veinte años de política paraguaya, Ed. Laurel, Asunción, 1983.
Serrano, Joaquín Soler: Escritores a fondo, Planeta, Barcelona, 1986.
Sicard, Alain: "'Yo el Supremo' de Augusto Roa Bastos: le mythe et l'histoire", in Hommage des hispanistes français a Noël Salomon, Editorial Laia, Barcelona, 1979.
Sosnowski, Saúl (comp.): Augusto Roa Bastos y la producción cultural americana, Ediciones de la Flor/Folios Ediciones, Buenos Aires, 1986.
Sosnowski, Saúl & Urbanyi, Pablo: "Augusto Roa Bastos: exilio y escritura", Plural, Núm. 143, 1983.
Subercaseaux, Bernardo: "'Tirano Banderas' en la narrativa hispanoamericana (la novela del dictador 1926-1976)", Anales de la Universidad de Cuenca, Tomo XXXIII, Abril, 1978.
Valencia-Villa, Hernando: La Constitución de la Quimera. Rousseau y la República Jacobina en el Pensamiento Constitucional de Bolivar, Editorial de la Caja de Herramientas, Bogotá, 1982.
Vargas Llosa, Mario: "Novela primitiva y novela de creación en América Latina", in Aurora Ocampo (ed.), La crítica de la novela iberoamericana contemporánea, UNAM, Mexico, 1973.
Verdevoye, Paul ed.: 'Caudillos', 'Caciques' et Dictateurs dans le roman Hispano-Américain, Editions Hispaniques, Paris, 1978.

Viñas, David: Indios, ejército y frontera, Siglo Veintiuno editores, Mexico, 1982.
Viroli, Maurizio: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the 'Well-Ordered Society', Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988.
White, Hayden: Tropics of Discourse. Essays in Cultural Criticism, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1985.
White, Richard Alan: Paraguay's Autonomous Revolution. 1810-1840, University of New Mexico Press, Alberquerque, 1978.
Williams, Raymond: Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, Fontana, London.